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ABSTRACT

These newsletters examine issues in education along the United States and Mexico border. Topics in Part 1 include the ramifications of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) for education, the impact of immigration on schools, and the structure and history of the Mexican educational system and its reforms in theory and practice. Educators along the border have voiced concerns about the effects of NAFTA, most notably the impact of population growth on school facilities and budgets already stretched by illegal and legal immigration and the movement of populations from rural to urban areas on both sides of the border. Many in the United States are alarmed at the continuing waves of immigrants and discriminate against both legal and illegal immigrants. In any case the areas of concern that have been most frequently cited by border educators and experts have been growth and immigration. Some saw the burgeoning population as an opportunity; others saw it as a problem. Nevertheless, all agreed that action must be taken to develop curriculum alignment between the United States and Mexico, teacher training and exchange, and the use of telecommunications and teleconferencing in border states education. This report also looks at characteristics of immigrant students, profiles a Mexican college student who has attended school in both Mexico and the United States, and highlights research pertaining to Hispanic immigrant students. In Part II, sections draw upon interviews with teachers and administrators in Laredo (Texas) and Nuevo Laredo (Tamaulipas, Mexico) and cover the following topics: (1) an agreement between the U.S. and Mexican Education Secretaries to foster binational curriculum alignment, and the difficulty of lack of congruence between the two national education systems; (2) cross-national differences in teacher education and certification; (3) needs for more bilingual teachers and for cross-cultural staff development in the United States, and inadquacies of U.S. teacher training and binational teacher exchange programs; (4) bilingual education and second language learning; (5) advantages of two-way bilingual programs for all students; (6) politics and controversies surrounding bilingual education; (7) need for comprehensive social services for children and families along the border; (8) special education and mainstreaming in both countries; (9) plans by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory to foster development of a binational vision of what border education should be; and (10) immigration phobia. This issue also contains an interview with Derrick Bell on race and racism in American education. (SV)

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Border Issues in Education

(Part 1)

Consider this . . .

> *For those who live near it, the border is an opportunity, not a barrier... It divides us because it marks the ending and the beginning of our national identities.*
>
> **—Maria del Carmen Marquez de Romero Aceves, Mexican Senator, Baja, California**

> *I am a man of the border. There, I live the Mexican identity day by day. I see the contrast of cultures.*
>
> **—Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta, Mexico's Secretary for Social Development, PRI presidential candidate, and Sonora resident**

> *La educación es la única cosa que nadie te podra quitar.*
> *(Education is the only thing which no one can take from you.)*
>
> **—traditional Mexican saying**

For decades, currents of controversy and impassioned public comment and debate on the 2,000-mile U.S./Mexican border have intermittently rushed and subsided. Border concerns routinely slow from foaming rapids to stagnant pools that in turn feed waterfalls. Worries of adequate, equitable education have been dammed and quieted by economic booms only to burst and rage freely in times of recession. But whether visibly boiling or mirror still, the currents that undergird the Border and its residents are rarely simple—just as riverbeds are rarely permanent. And although the African proverb promises "Anything allowed to run free will cleanse itself," we contemplate the border's currents knowing that they flow according to their own immutably fluid mechanics.

With these realizations in mind, *SEDLETTER* undertook this special two-part report on border issues in education. With the support of several associates who have worked in education along the U.S./Mexican border in Texas and New Mexico, we sought to map the basic concerns of the region and their impact on education in the Southwestern states and beyond. Although the U.S. Congress only recently voted to enact the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), we began months ago with a handful of educators in Texas and New Mexico who were already taking preliminary peeks at the issues and concerns of schooling in light of NAFTA's possible passage. The question of how education would differ along the border in the event of NAFTA's enactment was a multi-faceted query that one SEDL associate—former Ysleta, Texas, school superintendent Dr. Mauro Reyna—asked of educators along the border in early October. He found that although most of the educators were interested by the possibilities of a NAFTA, and were often living with the boom of free-trade growth, few had secured time in the bustle of day-to-day operations to concentrate on the trade agreement's specific educational ramifications. By contrast, we discovered that at least a year in advance of the hotly debated Congressional vote, theorists and policymakers had in fact broached the subject among themselves and had begun to forge plans and alliances—all of which will be discussed in the following pages.

Beyond that discovery, at least three truths emerged early in our investigation. They became so obvious and recurrent in our search for information and perspective that we quickly began to understand them as givens: First, none of the current flood of public opinion can be said to address the essence of border potence and possibility for people's lives: *No matter what actions are taken to restrict the flow of students and families from Mexico into the U.S., and no matter what becomes of this or any additional free trade agreements, children and families from Mexico have, do, and will continue to cross the Rio Grande River into Texas and New Mexico, and the fenced border markers in California and Arizona in search of a better life.* As Reyna put it after his fact-finding tour of border educators: "Not all but *most* of the educators along the border feel immigration is a given. As the Rio Grande flows, so flows population growth. Growth is east and south down the river. At this point, we're more concerned about making the most of it, since there's no real way to stop it."

Second, we were compelled to face another essential truth that is conspicuously absent from most, if not all, reports on border education: *Children and families who cross the border to communities and schools in the U.S. are not empty vessels. Many have begun and/or completed levels of schooling in Mexico. Thus, to plan, form agendas or otherwise address "best" strategies for educating Mexican immigrant children without first understanding the Mexican educational system in theory and practice is foolhardy.* Since the number of published comparative educational studies on schools in Mexico and in the U.S. can be counted on one hand, the research base for such one-sided-agenda setting is tenuous at best. Further, Mexican officials articulated their sensitivity to the issue at least as early as 1986 at a League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC) conference, the proceedings of which appear as *U.S. Immigration Reform: The View from Across the Border.* "Mexico is certain to resist any attempt by the U.S. Congress or the Administration to impose unilateral solutions on bilateral or regional problems," the proceedings begin. "In San Antonio, Mexican officials reiterated that unilateral solutions will not work in today's world. Watch for them to say it more often and more forcefully in the future," the authors conclude.

The sentiments of these Mexican officials dovetail with those of progressive early childhood educators, multiculturalists, and educators committed to systemic change. All argue that bringing impacted parties to the table from the start, so that all can buy-into the selected process, is the only lasting way to get to yes in a world as complex and striated as our own. Yet knowledge and understanding of Mexican education history, structure, and present reform implementation is arguably the most critical missing link U.S. educators face along the border and across the nation.

Third, we discovered the border itself to be a vital entity with personalities as varied and similar as the communities that comprise it. *El Paso-Cuidad Juarez, Laredo-Nuevo Laredo, Hidalgo/McAllen-Reynosa—indeed, each set of twin cities straddling the official line that dissects the continent into distinctive countries are nonetheless reliant upon one another for past, present, and future survival. In fact, border culture is evolving so rapidly that it could well render the most carefully crafted approach to education between the U.S. and Mexico obsolete before it can be implemented. Therefore since few rules apply, better understanding and more knowledge seems essential.*

In Part 1 of our report, we venture closer looks at some preliminary predictions of the kind of educational demands NAFTA may inspire, at the impact of immigration on schools, and perhaps most importantly at the structure and history of the Mexican educational system and its reforms in theory and practice. To unify these disparate themes in human terms and to endow our utterances with meanings that extend beyond the official reports

Somebody
LOVES
TEXAS
MAP
General Land Office

School children in a Reynosa, Tamaulipas neighborhood in Mexico. (Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

and academic texts we reference, as well as to mirror our own exploration perspective, we drew from the best of contemporary literature set in Mexico. Their status as national bestsellers aside, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* and Harriet Doerr's *Consider This, Señora* provide undercurrents of perspective that may never appear in policy papers or reform plans. We could, for example, unearth no finer caution to guide us in our study than that offered by a wise and resilient Mexican landowner who watches in bewilderment as two "NorteAmericans," an artist and a developer, convince themselves to purchase part of his ancestral home that they have only cursorily surveyed:

> *Don Enrique noticed that she [the artist] was exaggerating everything in her drawing, the fields, the mountains, the good order of dwellings that faced the pond.... He became concerned.*
>
> *"Consider this, Señora," Don Enrique said. "You are transforming Amapolas into something more beautiful than it is...Were you there long enough to walk about?"*
>
> *Is he crazy, Bud [the developer] asked himself. We've already told him we'd buy.*

By the same token, we ask that you look at the issues realistically and objectively with us before forming opinions or buying into plans of action. Our impressions may differ from your own, but at worst each will be well considered and better informed.

Border perceptions: From permeable membrane to a whole new world

> *"Anything could be true or false, depending on whether one believed it."* —**from Laura Esquivel's Like Water for Chocolate**

> *What I have found is a correlation between levels of education and cosmopolitanism that is very much a border phenomenon. A cosmopolitan person is one who learns a different language in addition to his or her own, and has a taste for different cultures without losing his own. As you go down in educational levels, you find stronger cultural identity that is less tolerant of others.*
>
> **—Jorge Bustamante, President of El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana, Mexico**

Definitions of the border are almost as plentiful, personally perceived and inevitable as river rapids, quicksand, and ordinary currents. For some, the border is the free zone-line between two magnets, a fence or a natural barrier that keeps people inside or outside by simultaneously dividing and attracting—depending on the definer's needs. Such visions are perhaps best summed by William Langewiesche, who bluntly concludes: "You need a *them* to have an *us*. . . . The border is a word game." But others perceive borders more globally, as permeable, man-made membranes through which people freely flow. They sometimes prefer to call the overlapping land with a line drawn through the middle of the two countries "MexAmerica." They may also refer to locations where industrialized "First World" countries and developing countries share borders as the "Fourth World"—or a region with a distinct status. This global mindset finds favor today, both as evidenced in the NAFTA accords and as articulated in the work of Jorge Bustamante and other border scholars. People who call borderlands "home" tend to value their independence and sense of "otherness" from their nations' heartlands. The Texas movement for independence from Mexico, for example, grew out of dissatisfaction with central Mexican rule. Then, as now, some borderlanders on the Mexican and Texas sides sought to create a Republic of Sierra Madre comprised of land along the Rio Grande and much of northern Mexico. One need only look to the voting patterns of Mexican borderlanders today who who have repeatedly rejected the ruling Mexican political party at the polls to see how perception transforms itself into reality over time.

Regardless of the border definition each of us believes to be truest, those distant from the national dividing line may find it difficult to fully comprehend its dynamism. Paired border communities in the U.S. and Mexico look more like bloated Siamese twins through which 255 million individual passages are made annually as people go about the business of living. Yet the dichotomous anxiety and ease of permanently crossing the border is physically, socially, culturally and politically complex. Like France and various other countries worldwide, Mexico has officially enacted measures to protect its language and culture from its larger, sometimes overbearing northern neighbor. Along the U.S./Mexican border, race only exacerbates the difficulty of choosing to cross legally or illegally since it requires the borderlander to choose when and whether he or she assimilates from a "Mexican" to a "Mexican American," from a voluntary immigrant to a minority in U.S. schools that have been known to underserve minority students. Given the deep wounds and animosity that permeated Mexico after the 1846 war that resulted in school children using maps that showed U.S. border states as "Mexican territory temporarily occupied," nationalistic distrust could only have been strengthened by xenophobia in the ensuing 150-odd years. Further, border academicians worldwide contend that ethnic strife is born when mainstream societies coerce assimilation of all groups in a nation—a notion that inspires strong nationalistic resistance from minorities interested in preserving their national identities. Ironically, the experts note, friction and resistance escalate in border communities inhabited by people with similar ethnic backgrounds like those along the Latino-dominant U.S./Mexico border.

Surveying the Borderscape: Education issues in the wake of the NAFTA debate

> *"The truth! The truth! Look, Tita, the simple truth is that the truth does not exist; it all depends on a person's point of view."*
>
> **—from *Like Water for Chocolate***

> *Some observers believe that we should allow the border to function as a safety valve for Mexico, let Salinas turn the Mexican economy around, and give free trade an opportunity to work. They say Mexicans prefer Mexico and will stay there if they have hope for the future. The lesson of Tijuana, however, seems to be that economic development may actually increase the flow of immigrants.*
>
> **—from William Langewiesche's *The Border***

For some, NAFTA will ideally create what border experts call an "Integrated Borderland," or one in which neighboring nations eliminate all existing barriers to trade and human movement across the previous boundary. Labor flows from one side to the other without restriction, and nationalism gives way to an internationalist mindset that encourages each nation to offer up a part of its sovereignty for the mutual good.

The "Integrated Borderland" ideal also lies at the heart of what border educators see as the solution. Former Ysleta, Texas, Independent School District superintendent and SEDL associate Dr. Mauro Reyna interviewed 17 educators in the U.S./Mexican border twin communities of El Paso, Ysleta, San Elizario, Hidalgo, McAllen, Brownsville, Mission, Edinburg, and Laredo. Most of the interviewees are district school superintendents, a few are college presidents and deans, and others hold decisionmaking positions in educational agencies that work with border populations. All live the issues and the culture that is the U.S./Mexico border every day. When asked to detail their impressions of what the then-dormant NAFTA discussions would mean to schooling along the border, their responses proved to be as varied as the populations in their districts and the personalities of their communities. Seven areas of concern were, however, recurrently noted among them:

1) **exponential population growth and its impact on school facilities and budgets that are already stretched** (As early as 1977 in a *Case Study of the Impact of Students from Mexico Upon a Typical Texas Border School District*, Texas Education Agency researchers called the need for additional school facilities "severe"—which, the report implied, put the situation mildly);

2) **the impact of illegal and legal immigration and the movement of populations from rural to urban areas on both sides of the border**;

3) **the needs of local industry, employment trends, trade, technical training, post-secondary educational opportunities, and the effects of all these on families in schools;**

4) **the limited number of bilingual teachers, too many of whom are trained too far away from the border** (Even though the South Texas border initiative is a $460 million funding program aimed at nine border area institutions of higher learning over the next four years, the effects will likely take years to be felt at the elementary and secondary levels);

5) **the debate on school-wide bilingualism and the need for a linguistic bridge across the border**;

6) **the urgent need for current demographic and student data from the U.S. and Mexico to inform educational planning and policy**; and

7) **health concerns** (i.e., nutrition, the effects of poverty in the colonias, and the need for a medical training facility to meet border area needs).

Of these seven areas, the most frequently cited were growth and immigration. While some saw the burgeoning population phenomenon as opportunity; others saw it as problem. Further, many of the interviewees saw immigration and the educational needs of newcomers as both linchpin and springboard for many—if not all—of their border-specific education concerns.

The educational economics of immigration: America's "curious paradox"

In essence, tax dollars are spent by half of the federal government to make this border an effective barrier while tax dollars are also used by other bureaucrats to make it more open.—**Ellwyn Stoddard, Frontiers, Borders and Border Segmentation in the Journal of Borderland Studies**

We estimate that the Mexican population will grow to over 100 million by the year 2000. The structure of the age pyramid shows us that very large numbers of young people will require employment in the coming years. Even with a reduced rate of population growth, we will have opportunities for half of them. . . The economic conditions of your country make it more attractive to work in the U.S. than in Mexico. . . . Young people no longer migrate from only the countryside, but from the cities and with a high school education obtained at the expense of the Mexican government. **—speech to LULAC gathering by Mexican senator Maria del Carmen Marquez de Romero Aceves**

The truth is that no one knows the consequences of Mexican immigration; it is a movement of the largest scale, immensely complicated, around which various arguments can easily be constructed.
—from William Langewiesche's *Atlantic Monthly* article, "The Border"

Illegal immigration will likely fluctuate in inverse proportion to the political will to control it. **—Richard Estrada, columnist, *Dallas Morning News***

In the wake of the present sluggish U.S. economy and high unemployment, immigration and free trade debate have "sucked" the nation into a whirlpool of claims and tangents on immigration blockades and "English only" arguments. During the past several months the media have saturated the airwaves and spun our heads with claims and counterclaims, promises and fears, expert economic analysis, and common-sensical guesswork. But little, if any of the debate has focused on what happens in schools. For a number of reasons and years, politicians and educators have generally bemoaned the presence of Mexican immigrant students—documented ("legal") and undocumented ("illegal")—in border schools. They've sought to ferret out and count students, and they've fought for federal funding to replenish inadequate state and local educational coffers to meet perceived immigrant need. Most recently, the Clinton Administration proposed granting full citizenship to the millions of legal immigrants in this country, in part to ensure that their civil rights are not violated. In some cases, communities cry, "We just can't afford it anymore. We're adding two schools a year to keep up with the number of immigrants in our town." Other towns leaders, like those of Columbus, New Mexico, have been forced from the outside to re-examine long-standing practices of openly educating students from the Mexican side of the border free of charge, and in some cases driving buses to the border to ease the process. "Why not educate them," 81-year-old Mayor Watson asks, parroting the logic of many border twin cities whose economic, cultural, social, and political interdependence is undeniable. "The more you educate them [Mexican students], the less you have to take care of them later."

California Governor Pete Wilson's recent call to verify students' residency at the border along with California and Texas reports of immigration agents who check northbound children at the border for school paraphernalia have angered some and been cheered by others. Although President Clinton said in August that he didn't "think we should deny educational services" to illegal immigrants, the states' actions send mixed signals to a nation of school educators bound by *Plyler v Doe*, the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that guaranteed the right to education for immigrant students—regardless of their documented status. Educators along the border contend that Mexican students will continue to cross the border to attend U.S. schools in order to learn in English—whether they have to sneak across, or be detained in border patrol offices, or drive boldly across each morning in cars with Mexican license plates to the school house steps.

Because Mexican immigrants are, by definition, mobile and frequently come to the border communities by way of Mexican urban areas and move on to large urban areas like Los Angeles and Chicago, their impact is felt ultimately across the nation. That impact is tainted, however. Many in the

U.S. remain ever alarmed at continuing waves of immigration from Latin American, Asian, African, and Carribean countries. Usually, the same complaints are heard: immigrants take from without contributing to U.S. resources. Although such beliefs are contradicted by the fact that immigrants do contribute and contribute substantially to the federal tax base as consumers of products and services in this country, the beliefs persist.

Despite well-documented reports that both countries glean positive effects from the work and presence of Mexican nationals on both sides of the border, and despite international agreements that guarantee the fair treatment of workers who migrate from the nations of their birth, the misinformation that feeds stereotypes grows. A *USA Today* poll this summer revealed that 65 percent of U.S. adults favor reducing immigration. That's the highest percentage since World War II. According to the poll, anti-immigrant sentiments were strongest among whites; Southerners; and people with lower incomes, less education, and conservative viewpoints. Other observers blame the xenophobia on persistently high U.S. unemployment and underemployment rates and note that California's reaction may stem from the fact that 25 percent of all foreign-born people in the U.S. live in California, and of that number more than a quarter live in Los Angeles County and are of Mexican or Central and/or South American origin. Further, while some studies and commentators suggest that high levels of immigration contribute to African-American unemployment and salary declines in particular, a study on racially divided Miami debunks that idea. The reality, according to the U.S. Senate's Office of Research is that foreign-born immigrants who arrived in the U.S. between 1980 and 1990 are no more likely to be on public assistance than native-born U.S. residents. Because the newcomers are younger, fewer draw social security.

The bottom line adds up to this: the nation's fears have never been realized, but their perception is as firmly ingrained in the culture as are the Italian Columbus and the English pilgrims and Calvinists. Although few officials have labeled the difference between working definitions of past and present immigration, prejudice undermines the dictionary definition of "immigrants" as "pioneers."

It should therefore have surprised no one that discussions of NAFTA in the past few months commanded front-page news, usually in front of new discussions of immigrant identification cards. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) crackdowns on "illegal" immigration such as the recent imposition of Operation Blockade in El Paso seem to have accomplished little save to appease the most fearful and curtail the bustling border trade that sustains that community's economy.

The National Council of La Raza, among others, says this very real immigration paradox is rooted at the heart of immigration policy in the U.S. Begun in 1942, the Bracero guest worker program between the U.S. and Mexico was repeatedly extended after World War II. The rationale for the extensions was consistently "labor shortages," and the program established a magnet to pull workers steadily north with or without the program's explicit sanction. Poor, jobless, and hounded by inflation and the needs of large families, young men from Mexico established an informal pattern of finding work—often at a former worksite or where an uncle or brother had found work. They made money for three to six months to send home in money orders, and returned home by Christmas, after which the cycle began again. In the Immigration Act of 1959, the Migrant Workers Agreement in 1964, the Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), and most recently in a 1990 law increasing legal immigration by a projected 35 percent, Mexican immigrants in particular have been both beneficiaries and victims. Designed to legalize an estimated three million immigrants who were living in the U.S. and thereby curb the exploitation of an underground underclass, the Immigration Act of 1986, according to La Raza, failed first in method and second in effect. In retrospect, the dual failure stems from failure to fully assess the situation and plot a course of action designed by both of the countries and cultures involved. IRCA benefited individuals, for example, but did little to stabilize the status of family members who continued to risk deportation. Further, requiring employers to prevent undocumented workers from entering the legitimate job market did little save to increase an already thriving counterfeit document market and increase discrimination against resident and foreign-born Latinos. In fact, a General Accounting Office study reports that 19 percent of employers admitted to adopting discriminatory hiring practices in hopes of "protecting themselves" against the sanctions of the IRCA.

"Always has been; always will be.
Immigration is its historical and [illegible]

Immigration has always been a problem in America. Ask any Native American. —**Linda Ellerbee, syndicated columnist**

"Chenca crossed the bridge between Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras for the hundredth time, without even realizing it. . . The watchmen from both countries let her do it, because they'd known her since she was a child. Besides it was amusing to watch her go from one side to the other talking to herself and chewing on her robozo.

—**from *Like Water for Chocolate***

Depending on one's perspective and point of origin, modern immigration to the U.S. from Mexico can be traced from the Mexican War in the early 19th century. When the U.S. annexed a third of Mexico's territory which Texas rebels had established claim to after Mexico had previously won it from Spain, 77,000 Mexicans became U.S. citizens. Around the turn of the century, the Mexican Revolution brought a mass exodus of Mexican citizens to the U.S. Like the Native American Indians and the African slaves, these immigrants were soundly discriminated against. "No Mexicans Allowed" signs littered establishments as the order of the day although immigration across the U.S./ Mexican border still flowed in a stream as steady, undeniable, and essentially uninterrupted as the Rio Grande River. From the 19th century to the early decades of this century, however, U.S. authorities paid little attention to Mexican immigration.

Historically, according to Tijuana statistician Jorge Bustamante, recessions in the U.S. economy have given rise to xenophobia that in turn inspires restrictive immigration policies. Bustamante has written often since his seminal study in 1975 on the quantifiable particulars of Mexican labor as it impacts U.S. industrial growth. In a recent interview, he was adamant in his contention that educational issues cannot be sensibly discussed or evaluated in the U.S. during recessionary, and therefore, volatile times. "In every U.S. economic recession this century—be it that of 1921, 1929-35, 1947, 1954, 1974, 1980 or the current one—the same pattern is repeated," he explains. "Recession is accompanied by unemployment that creates the exorbitant xenophobia among sections of the population. The emerging sentiments are taken advantage of by politicians who use the calamity to make scapegoats of immigrants who are blamed for budgetary crises and crime. The public then demands that these politicians do something about the immigrant 'problem,' and the politicians suggest immigrant measures like the recent Operation Blockade in El Paso." Although the economy eventually recovers in each of the instances and things get back to normal until the next recession when the whole scenario repeats itself. Bustamante argues that, "under the present circumstances, no one can understand the possibilities of educational interaction that could be defined in periods of economic normality. It's impossible to speak rationally about education along the border now because people refer to a debate that's based on emotions and myths rather than facts."

Perhaps this is the worst of times to broach discussions of education attainment and equity along the border, but since 80 percent of the Mexican American population in the U.S. live in states bordering on Mexico, few educators can afford to wait for an economic upturn. Discrimination isn't limited to illegal immigrants; rather it extends to those who immigrate legally, bringing their talents and professional expertise with them. These facts attest to the long-standing, emotional impact of immigration in this country. Like the Turks in Germany, the U.S. has maintained a fickle history of welcome and disdain regarding Mexican immigrants. When more workers were and are needed to pick crops and do the grunt work of building infrastructure and service industries, migrant workers are not only welcomed but governmentally sanctioned. In this way, public opinion as to the function and form of the U.S./Mexican border is likened to a sponge: When it can no longer hold newcomers, the borders close, and the sponge is wrung out on the other side of the river. Thus the El Paso Operation Blockade (a.k.a. Operation Hold the Line), during which the INS arrested hundreds of illegal immigrants at the border and drove them downstream to the small Mexican city of Palomas. Understandably, Palomas complained of it's inability to handle the INS-produced flood. Indeed, in a country that remains largely rural with fewer than 200 small cities able to claim populations of more than 15,000, any large number of "dumped" undocumented immigrants will present logistical hardships.

Boiling borders: Immigration, our rapidly changing world, and the nature of human beings who constantly seek to redefine "the better life"

> *Tita was literally "like water for chocolate"—she was on the verge of boiling over.* —from Laura Esquivel's novel Like Water for Chocolate

> *No matter how high you build the fence at the border, the migrant will learn to jump higher.*
> —from LULAC's *U.S. Immigration Reform: The View from Across the Border*

Fifty million workers leave their homelands each year for a little while or for good to work in other countries. Their reasons are as varied as their names, the communities in which they grow, and the politics and economics that define each government's policy toward them. But most come and go to increase their opportunity for a "better life." Mexican officials see this emigration of their country men and women to the U.S. as contrary to their national interests. Repeatedly, incessantly, they maintain that Mexico prefers the exportation of goods rather than the exportation of labor, thus NAFTA.

But the economic realities of a nation whose interest on its debt devours the largest single portion of its GNP means an economic canyon from which it is difficult to ascend. Coupled with the fourth largest population growth rate in the world, and an increase in life expectancy from 41.5 years in 1940s to 63 years in the 1980s, steady immigration (legal and illegal) appears inevitable for the foreseeable future. Given that Mexico's capital city houses 26 percent of the nation's people, immigration from first the poor, rural countryside to the cities and then across the border in search of jobs, education for the children, and a future that promises more than simple survival seems a logical, natural progression. Ironically, surveys suggest that most immigrants wish to return to their home communities in Mexico once they've earned enough money abroad to gain economic independence and a modicum of hope for the future.

Daughters like this one in Reynosa study while their maquiladora-worker mothers meet. (Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

Tragically, none of these statistics and arguable perceptions of fact speak to the real legacy of immigrants—be they voluntary or involuntary. Human nature mandates that immigrants try any and every possible way to better their chances. With such determination as focus, Mexican Senator Aceves explains, "immigrants will put forth their greatest efforts and leave the best part of themselves in the U.S." In all of the discussions of immigration, this factor is most often not considered, not discussed, ignored, forgotten, and/or omitted entirely. Ironically, it is one facet of the debate that may be most capable of sparking hope against anti-immigrant prejudicial mindsets. As an obvious positive of the immigrant paradox, it could provide the paradigm shift educators need to help immigrants leave the best parts of themselves within the U.S. education system.

Immigration insights—from the bottom of the river

> *"Consider this. Señora. he [the pharmacist] said. "I cannot diagnose the cause of pain. I can only sell the medicine to alleviate it."*
> *"That is all I ask of you." she [the widow] said.*
> —from Harriet Doerr's *Consider This, Señora*

Characteristics that "typify" Mexican immigrant students are anything but marginal to learning

Profiles and statistics on the "typical" Mexican immigrant student seem definitive at first take. One-fifth of all undocumented immigrants are estimated to be children under age 15. Of the Hispanic population in the U.S., 62.6 percent are of Mexican origin. They are more likely to live in urban areas in the U.S. than in rural ones. They hail from larger, younger families than non-Hispanic residents of the U.S. High dropout rates, students who are overage for their grade levels, poor attendance, low achievement test scores, and poor rates of enrollment in colleges are also typical characteristics noted by those who research Mexican immigrant populations.

But what the stats don't tell us is something of the "typical" characteristics that are best understood in light of language and cultural differences, necessary family mobility concerns, and the importance of paid employment that naturally precludes all else in the survival of marginal populations. Other stresses immigrant students face may include adapting to a new and very different culture, learning a new language, and discrimination. Further, if the immigrant child's family entered the U.S. illegally, they also bring to school with them worries of deportation. According to a study by Katherine Hayes at the University of California in Los Angeles, immigrant students may drop out if their schools have few resources, their teachers are "burned out," or if they encounter discrimination from the larger society. She also reports there is no match between the skills immigrant students and their families need to get and hold the low-wage, service sector jobs many see as their only and therefore "best" chance for survival, and the skills the school prides itself on teaching. Although immigrant families typically believe strongly in the link between education and economic opportunities, no such link actually existed for them. Thus, she concludes, "many voluntary and involuntary Latino immigrant children are leaving school with no degree, few skills, and few hopes for the future."

Some students from Mexico, like "Juan" *(see his story on pages 12-15)* will have attended *secundaria* (7th to 9th grade), many more will have attended *primaria* (1st through 6th grade), and others may have never enrolled in school at all. Research has consistently shown that bilingualism—regardless of which two languages are mastered—is an intellectual asset as well as a practical one.

Regardless, Mexican immigrant students' lack of English proficiency is typically viewed as a reflection of their intellectual capacity—even though most U.S. schools do not promote bilingualism for all students. In this double standard, the paradox is again evident. Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa found that minority students who immigrate at 10 years of age or older have more success academically than do their counterparts who are born in the receiving country, despite markedly different language skills. They attribute the finding to other studies that show immigrant students retain much of their self-image from early experiences in their home countries.

Schools that have been most successful in effectively meeting the needs of Mexican immigrant students are, not surprisingly, good schools in general. Typically, they 1) have high expectations for student achievement; 2) cultivate parent involvement in the children's schooling; and 3) display strong and progressive tendencies in instructional and organizational leadership. Such schools also typically value the students' home language and culture; recognize and give immigrant population concerns priority; conduct outreach in parents' home language; train staff to understand and help meet immigrant needs; mainstream immigrant students in classes with English speaking students; and make placement decisions with appropriate assessments and expert consultation. Innovative and/or customized strategies like tutoring programs, health and social service coordination, and job training and placement have also proven particularly useful to immigrants—as have "second-chance" learning opportunities beyond "typical" U.S. school structure. The latter include night school, self-paced instruction, and workplace literacy training.

Perhaps most important of all, school staff who work most effectively with immigrants avoid discriminating against students they suspect may be undocumented. In its *ERIC Digest* paper "Undocumented Children in the Schools: Successful Strategies and Policies," the Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools suggests that teachers and administrators can sustain the spirit of *Plyler v. Doe* by:

- ☑ not asking about a student's immigration status or requesting documentation from a student;
- ☑ not barring access to any student on the basis of documentation status;
- ☑ not treating one student differently from others in order to determine residency status;
- ☑ not making inquiries of a student or parent to expose suspected status; and
- ☑ not requiring undocumented students or their parents to apply for social security numbers.

Most important, school staff should work to build a school environment that is open and hospitable to newcomers. Likewise instruction should reflect both a respect for native cultures and a commitment to helping students master English. To reach these ideals, some experts advocate teacher training and strong working relationships with immigrant families. Availing undocumented students to agencies and programs designed to help them is also recommended. The Emergency Immigrant Education Program, Section 204 of the Immigrant Reform and Control Act, the Transitional Program for Refugee Children, bilingual education program, Chapter 1 Programs, Head Start programs, special education, and free and reduced lunch plans provide but a partial list of provisions generally available to immigrant students and their families. — SEDL

[illegible] students picks berries in Michigan. (Photograph [illegible]

fluid pressure - *(Physics Mech.) the pressure exerted by a fluid, directly proportional to the specific gravity at any point and to the height of the fluid above the point.* **—Random House Dictionary**

This summer, the Clinton Administration won Congressional support for a budget plan that promised more government aid to California, Texas, Florida, and other states with large numbers of illegal immigrants. Admitting that the states must bear the brunt of newcomer educational, health and human services support while taxes contributed by immigrant purchasing power and consumption go largely to federal coffers, President Clinton said, "One of the reasons the federal government has not been forced to confront this, is that the states of California,Texas, and Florida have had to bear a huge portion of the costs of the failure of federal policy." Years ago, La Raza suggested the U.S. allow more immigrant workers to take advantage of legalization by providing them with classes and other opportunities to complete the documentation processes outlined in IRCA. As one of the largest organizations of Latino Americans, La Raza also recommends that the U.S. Congress extend the legalization period offered under IRCA and develop family unity programs to prevent the deportation of family members. Finally, La Raza argues that the employer sanctions undertaken by IRCA enactment should not only be repealed but never again imposed, given the ease with which employers used them to discriminate. While it's essential to stop employer exploitation of illegal immigrants, contends La Raza, increased penalties that do not include, preclude, or involve immigrant hiring should be developed and tested.

The entourage of Mexican elected officials who spoke at a LULAC conference in March of 1986 also warned that additional border security typically increases violent incidents and bilateral tensions. Mario Coria Salas, an economics professor at the Instituto Politecnico Nacional in Mexico City, suggested a "regulated program of legal contracts for Mexican laborers" that correspond to the anticipated labor needs of each region of the U.S.

Meanwhile, the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington, D.C. maintains "It is essential that immigration policy be revised to enhance—rather than impede—the nation's economic competitiveness in a high-wage, high-skills environment." President Clinton, who had proposed a reduction in border patrol agents for 1994, reversed his plan this summer and proposed that Congress appropriate $172.5 million to hire 600 new INS agents and curb illegal immigration across U.S. borders that he noted, "leak like a sieve." To be fair, the new Administration direction and plan were attributable in part to two ships of Chinese immigrants intercepted off the U.S. West and East coasts, and the illegal immigration status of the World Trade Center bombing mastermind. But the switch was also fired by a growing fear among U.S. residents—many of them first and second generation immigrants—that the nation is under siege and can't protect itself unless the borders are closed. Sixty-five percent of Hispanics in an extensive Latino National Political Survey said they felt that too many immigrants are entering the U.S.— ostensibly, explains *Dallas Morning News* columnist Richard Estrada, because "Hispanics know that massive, impoverished immigration is not benefitting the country." Far from

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accusing these Hispanics of pulling the ladder up behind them, Estrada argues that Hispanic Americans are not selfish for wanting their government to protect them from a limitless pool of immigrant competition in the labor, low-cost housing, and social service marketplaces. "Just because (Hispanics) do not want the United States to continue taking in more immigrants and refugees for permanent resettlement than the rest of the world combined, does not mean that they do not want the United States to continue taking in more newcomers than any other nation," he added.

The INS publically admits its border programs have been fragmented and that it heretofore has had no uniform plan to plug the leaking southern border. President Clinton and a host of California politicians have called for the reconsideration of National ID cards, machine-readable visas and passports that are "fraud-proof." Civil libertarians continue to argue that such cards smack of too much government control over individual freedoms, tacit sanction of police-state tactics, and an even greener light for employers to discriminate against newcomers. In short, as President Clinton phrased it, these groups fear the "Big Brotherism" that holograms and computer chips in these cards could well initiate.

Building border fluency: New policy currents, early prescriptions, lessons and solutions to inform the systemic re-thinking of border education in the global village

> *The idea of sitting at the table for dialogue and reflection—in the north, the south, or anywhere in the world—to analyze the implications of the migration phenomenon means there is a desire and an intention to find the solution. . . Between neighbors such as ourselves, the friendly dialogue is an obligation and an historical imperative.*
>
> **—Senator Antonio Riva Palcio Lopez as President of the Mexican Senate**

> *BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION requests that the state's congressional delegation, representatives from the Governor's office and other appropriate officials work collaboratively with the Mexican government to develop agreements and policies regarding border development which will have an impact on education.*
>
> **—December 1, 1992 New Mexico State Board of Education Resolution**

For the past 11 years, governors of U.S. and Mexican border states have met annually to discuss issues of state and federal importance. For the past two years, the group has formed Education Committees and issued resolutions of possible actions to alleviate the difficulties and growing pains posed by immigration, economic woes, and language and cultural diversity. Specifically, the committees called for exchange programs across the border, a binational council on education, teleconferencing and telecommunications links, and bicultural, bilingual, and binational teacher training efforts. Although the resolutions make sense, are needed, and are urgently penned, follow up and implementation beyond university-level exchanges have thus far eluded the group. Questions of elementary and secondary education persistently surface, but to little avail. Privately, some participants claim barriers persist on two levels: 1) Mexico border educators bring problems in hopes of devising bilateral solutions, and the border states officials of the U.S. bring successful strategies that have worked in the U.S. but may not be easily exportable to Mexico; 2) Mexican educators go home with solution portfolios customized to a different country and culture; and U.S. educators go home with newly skewed notions of Mexican "problem-ridden" and "developing" schools while gathering little new knowledge of the Mexican educational system.

In April of this year, the Latino Educators Committee on Free Trade and Education (LECFTE) met in Tucson, Arizona, to condense their prescriptions for educational policy in light of NAFTA. Like the Border Governors' Conference, LECFTE also proposed establishing a "Tri-lateral North American Education Commission of educators, citizens, and government officials . . . to harmonize the curriculum, standards, assessment, technology, professional development . . . to achieve a comparative understanding of educational systems of each country." But as an organization "formed in 1991 to address the lack of involvement of U.S., Mexican, and Canadian educators in the NAFTA negotiations," LECFTE focused on post-secondary educational attainment, adult literacy, and technological/vocational venues.

The U.S. border states' appreciation of the issues grew considerably, however, with a third boost in October of this year when the Texas and New Mexico State Boards of Education convened a joint meeting in El Paso, Texas. In position papers from their *Education in the Border Region* first joint meeting, the Boards—supported by New Mexico State Superintendent of Public Instruction Alan Morgan, as well as Texas Commissioner of Education Lionel Meno—outlined a concentric, five-level plan to make education in the border states of New Mexico and Texas an enriched experience both for Mexican immigrant students and for those native to the states. The meeting was perhaps most significant in that it sought to bring the discussion out of the realm of pure policy emanating from and directed toward higher education and commerce. Instead, NAFTA's impact was viewed from inside the classroom looking outside to a global village. The documents advocate for the establishment of "official ties with the education agencies of the border states of Mexico so we may pursue activities that will benefit the children we have in our classrooms today." Using bilingual, multicultural instruction as an umbrella, the Boards endorsed the development of:

- **binational school programs** that lead to a diploma that's recognized by states in the U.S. and Mexico. (Such programs, Jorge Bustamante notes, have been extremely successful on the university level between Mexico and Canada. Likewise, in September, the Texas A&M University Center in Mexico City was established to link business executives from Texas, Mexico, and other Latin American countries.)
- **a teacher exchange program** from Mexico's border states and New Mexico that leads to dual licensure for the teaching of core elements in binational schools;
- **a binational administrative collaborative** to "enhance understanding" and establish binational task forces between education, health, and social service agencies along the U.S./Mexico border.

The efforts of these three conferences and others are obviously building a body of progressive policy/thought, though it remains to be seen when and how the visions and the plans will manifest themselves in day-to-day life along the border and beyond. Indeed, the newness of these resolutions mirrors the ratification of NAFTA by the U.S., Mexico, and Canada and how that agreement will affect schools in all three countries over the short and long terms. In any event, since so few comparative studies have been undertaken, the missing piece remains research-based knowledge and true large-scale collaboration across the border in Mexico. In short, to gauge the river's current, its sources and historical meanderings must be considered.

National identity undergirds the history and structure of Mexican education

"When writing about Mexico, the truth is exciting enough."

—from Harriet Doerr's *Consider This, Señora*

As we progress to higher grades in education systems between Mexico and the U.S., we find greater similarity in systems, procedures, requirements and understanding. As we go down to earlier grades, we find greater disparity. The reason is history. Neither system is good or bad—each is simply different. The U.S. system is decentralized; the Mexican system is not. The real problem is that educators and politicians don't recognize the tremendous differences in the educational systems. —Jorge Bustamante, Border scholar and President of El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana, Mexico

My sense from the Mexican perspective is that for many years, Mexico didn't study what was happening in the U.S., just as the U.S. rarely looked south of the border for educational perspectives. Mexicans have been fairly self-sufficient in their educational reforms, and this inward-looking preference may continue to play a role—even though Mexican officials are now looking to world politics and economics for solutions.

—Carlos Alberto Torres, Assistant Dean, School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

At first glance, recent Mexican educational reforms may seem little more than *prima facia* replicas of reforms in the U.S. But, most have been discussed and studied by Mexican educators for decades. For example, the new law pushed through the Mexican National Assembly in July of this year by the Salinas de Gortari Administration extends compulsory education through the ninth grade. That extension, remind some Mexican educators, was discussed throughout the 1980s. The new law also lengthens the school year by 20 days to 200 days per year and establishes a system whereby families can secure scholarships for their school-age children, continue to be ensured free textbooks, and take part in new health and literacy campaigns. In addition, the law provides for parent-teacher organizations in each school—a concept and mandate that date back to the 1950s. The organizations in their latest iteration are designed in part to increase the efficiency of the teacher unions that government officials maintain have been far too politically powerful in the past. To further circumvent that power, the Administration proposes that federal teacher contract negotiations be decentralized to the state and local educational level, while simultaneously raising teacher salaries by some 20 percent. The government hopes to make many of the reforms, notes the *New York Times International*, by localizing school governance and working subtlely through National Solidarity Program community organizations. This "$3-billion-a-year initiative to fight poverty" was implemented by Secretary for Social Development and PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta of Mexican border state, Sonora.

In light of the history and structure of Mexico's education of its citizens, however, notions like site-based or localized decisionmaking, and the newest cries for restructuring and systemic reform in Mexico, may signal significantly different manifestations in that country than in the U.S.

A Mexican couple in Tijuana waiting to cross the border. Contrary to popular myth, many choose to work in San Diego for a few weeks at a time and return home to Tijuana for as many weeks or more. (Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

Plumbing and predicting those manifestations may mean examining long-held differences in school funding and quality between rural and urban public schools. But it may also require a closer, analytical look at the underlying reasons for compulsory education in Mexico over the past century. The Mexican government provides a public system of education for all students. However, families with greater resources often choose to send their children to private schools. Such families demand more of the schools and thereby help to improve them as a result of their high expectations. That fact, perhaps more than others, accounts for the qualitative differences between federal, state, and private schools in Mexico. While federal schools have grown 300 percent in population in the last 10 years, according to the United Nations, private schools remain small, well funded, and have not shown such increases. But, the growth in public schools is in direct relation to the population growth—particularly that of infants. Private schools, on the other hand, have grown less quickly

(continued on page 16)

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Juan's story is the story of many

To gather first-hand perceptions of schooling in Mexico, SEDLETTER sought out and interviewed "Juan," now a college student on the Texas side of the U.S./Mexico border. Juan spent the years we know as kindergarten through high school attending Mexican schools—only to repeat high school upon moving to the U.S. Along with a promise of anonymity, SEDLETTER pledged to share Juan's school story with educators who would listen and perhaps help others understand the educational realities of border students from Mexico who attend school in the U.S. Juan, in turn, pledged simple honesty.

A stagnant rainwater lagoon surrounds this southside Reynosa, Mexico colonia.

MY MOTHER CAME ACROSS TO BEAR me on the U.S. side of the border. So I was born in McAllen, Texas. I am an American citizen. For a week after I was born, I lived in McAllen, but I was raised in my parents' home in Reynosa, Mexico—across the Rio Grande River from McAllen. For 15 years, my father crossed every day from Reynosa to McAllen to work in the U.S., but the rest of the family didn't cross very often, maybe once every two months. The border was a barrier to us then because we were afraid. Immigration would always detain us and escort us off to the side to verify our documents—even though I am an American citizen. They asked us all kinds of questions about our citizenship. For this reason, we didn't like to cross to this side of the border.

I had no idea what it would be like to live here in the U.S. before the day six years ago when my father said it was time for the family to move to McAllen. He was encouraged to move here to make things easier on himself, and he already had a passport. So, the entire family moved with him. I was 18 then, and I didn't want to move. I'd gone to school in the federally run school all of my life.

In Reynosa when I was small, I first attended a public school that was similar to pre-kindergarten here in the U.S. In *primaria* from the 1st to 6th grade, I attended classes from 8 AM to 12 NOON. Primary education was set so that one group of kids attended in the morning and others from afternoon to early evening. In *secundaria* (7th to 9th grade) I attended classes from 8 AM to 3 PM. In primaria there were about 30 students in my class; in secundaria, about the same number, more or less. Then I attended the *preparatoria*, or high school. I received certificates for completing the secundaria level, and the preparatoria. We studied math, history, natural sciences (that included physics and chemistry), and Spanish composition. I didn't study English until I was in seventh grade.

Overall, I'd say school was different in Mexico. In math, for example, children are taught their multiplication tables at an earlier age. My sister is currently enrolled in the third grade here in the U.S., and she has yet to learn to multiply. In Mexico, by first or second grade, multiplication tables would have been taught already. Another thing I've noticed in the U.S. is that very little homework is assigned the majority of the time, and students are not allowed to take the textbook home. In Mexico, homework was surely assigned every day. The government provided textbooks throughout primaria and for at least the first year of secundaria.

There's also a difference at the high school level in attaining a diploma. To graduate in Mexico, everyone is required to take specific subjects and at specified levels. To graduate you must pass these classes. Here, it is different. In Mexico, for example, to graduate from secundaria, a student is required to pass Algebra II or advanced Algebra. Here, a student doesn't have to take Algebra II; Algebra I is sufficient (or levels below it) to obtain a diploma. In Mexico, everyone, regardless of interest, must take the same courses. Maybe two or three courses may be considered electives, but mainly the curriculum is rigid and standardized and everyone is required to follow it, without any changes. That's true, I hear, even with the new educational reforms that are planned and in some cases are being implemented.

In Mexico, everyone graduates with the same level of education gained from the same materials. Of course, some learn more, others learn less. But the same content in taught throughout the nation. That's why I think if you

Texas border cities Hidalgo and McAllen lay across the Rio Grande River. (Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

look at what schools teach and how they teach here in the U.S. and what's taught and how it's taught in Mexico, I think Mexico's system is better. But that doesn't mean that a graduate of the Mexican schools might be better prepared for a career than a graduate of the U.S system. I can't seriously say that's the case. The U.S. high school I attended had excellent teachers. If a student desires to learn, and, if the student seeks out the classes that he or she should take, they're better off here in the U.S. than in Mexico. But, everyone doesn't have the same opportunity. If you don't know how to choose the best, most-needed classes you don't have the same chance.

That's the main barrier to education in the U.S. that I see. There isn't an exact curriculum for all students to meet in order to prepare for college. It is not that we are *better* prepared in Mexico, it's simply that everyone had the chance to be at the same level, everyone had an equal chance. Another sister of mine only obtained a Algebra I math education. The preferred level of preparedness is Calculus, I believe. If she were to attend college she would be starting with remedial courses and not the courses that one is expected to begin with in college. If everyone were required to enroll in the required college preparatory courses in high school, she wouldn't be starting out from behind.

That's a shame because my little sister is probably more eager to learn than I was when I was in school in Mexico. We strongly encourage her to learn as much as possible, and the family helps her in her studies and homework. I don't believe many people here in the U.S. encourage their kids as much as our family does. But then again, the family was the same way with me in Mexico. And they encourage me still.

The college equivalent here in the U.S. to what I took in preparatoria is general chemistry and general physics. I also received a diploma as an Electronic Mechanics Technician. In Mexico, it is called a "*Bachillerato técnico*" (a technical diploma). One is enrolled in a technical field while enrolled, at the same time, in the preparatoria. It was not an apprenticeship, however; training for the technical diploma was entirely in the classroom. Although, we had access to laboratories for experiments, it was like a shop in the school.

I have heard of students who return to Mexican schools having gone to school for awhile in the U.S. They are said to be placed two years behind the grade level they reached in the U.S. But, I think that for the most part students are placed at the same level. Or, an examination is given to determine their level of education and they are placed accordingly.

Both the education systems in Mexico and in the U.S. can be improved. The U.S. should simply do what has been done in Mexico: Ask the same requirements for all students, for everyone. To improve the Mexican education system, if I could, I'd get rid of the differences in physical facilities, in the classrooms and school environment. Some classrooms in Mexico are without windows, which can be hard on the children during cold weather, unlike the schools here that are equipped to be comfortable. This is lacking in Mexico. Meals are not provided, or much else, but textbooks are provided by the Mexican government. And the Mexican textbooks I wouldn't change.

On English as a foreign language . . .

One problem I faced here in the U.S. was my lack of English language skills. In Mexico, I completed my math education through Integral Calculus. But when I arrived here, I was placed in F.O.M. (Fundamentals of Mathematics). I was held back solely because of my English skills. I took a test, and they knew I'd finished preparatoria in Mexico, but they placed me in Fundamentals of Math anyway. I was not the only one that this happened to. There were several of us from Reynosa, and we all went through the same experience as a group. We were in the same classes. The teacher tried to talk to the school counselor, to see if she could at least teach us Algebra I, if not a higher level of math. But, the school decided not to let her.

I didn't like it, but what else could I do? What I wanted was to learn English. It was the most important objective. As they say, *ni modo*, too bad. I lost four years of high school math. Science was just as bad. Some of the courses that I'm enrolled in now, I already took in preparatoria, which is the equivalent to the first 18 months of college here in the U.S.

On teachers. . .

Even though teacher's salaries are very low in Mexico—nothing comparable to what a teacher would get here—teaching is still considered a middle class profession in Mexico. Teachers in the U.S. probably wouldn't enjoy teaching in Mexico unless they saw it as a true calling; only if they intended to teach for the sake of teaching, not for the money. If they didn't become rich teaching here in the U.S., they have less chance of doing so in Mexico.

Perhaps some Mexican teachers might want to train here in the U.S., but I wouldn't know what kind of training or preparation teachers get in Mexico now.

On school-linked health and social services. . .

In primaria there was no nurse at school. In secundaria—I'm not sure—health care may have been available. For me in Reynosa, there were no governmentally funded free lunches, or health care services that were free of charge. In Mexico, as far as health care is concerned, all workers have access to social security clinics. In any case, the services were all apart from the school.

As for Mexicans in this country without documentation, I do know of some that are here illegally, and they receive W.I.C., food stamps etc. Some need the services; some do not. Many could provide for themselves, I think, but they still take advantage of the system.

On college and the impact of NAFTA. . .

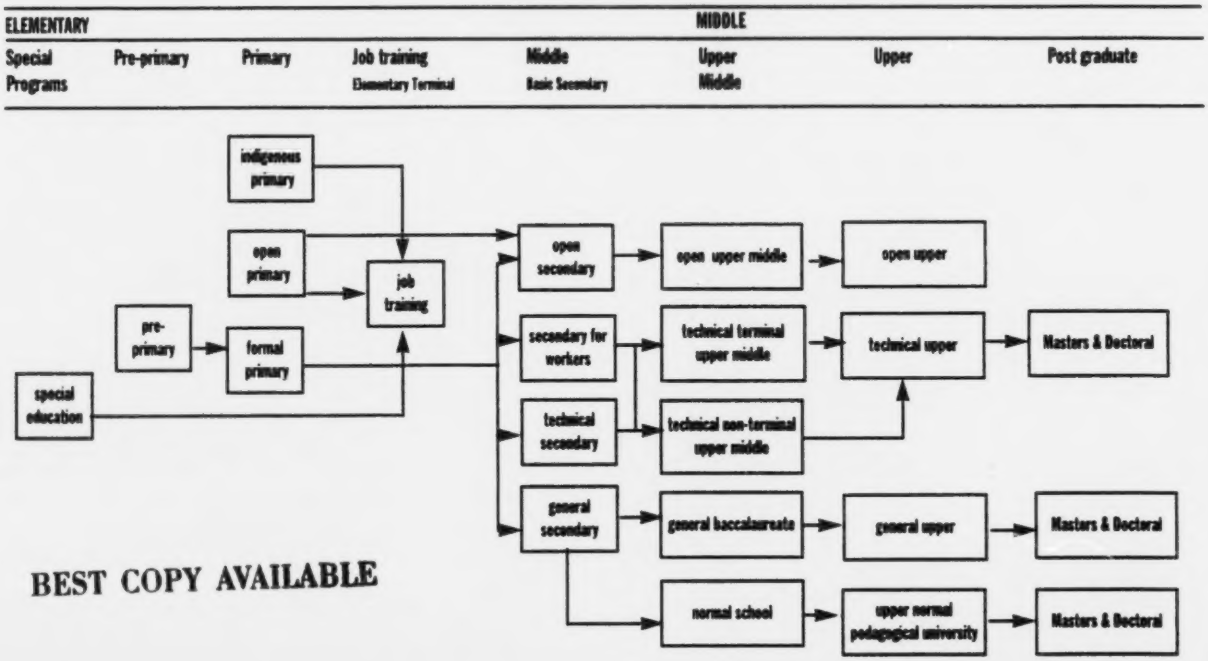
In college, I study Electrical Engineering. I've always been interested in electronics. A cousin of mine is an electrical engineer and has a private business in this field in Monterrey, where my family went every summer. I worked with him at his office every once in a while, and I'd like to join him as a professional someday. It is my desire to learn as much as possible in the U.S. and return to Mexico to apply that knowledge.

I might look for employment as an engineer along the U.S./Mexican border, and I might consider commuting back and forth, like my father did. With the free trade agreement, I think there will be a greater demand for new engineers because the *maquiladoras* along the border will require more engineers.

Although a free trade agreement between the two countries will have an impact on education on both sides of the border, things will have to be improved a whole lot more on both sides in order to comply with the demand from businesses like the maquiladoras. Some maquiladoras already send their employees to the U.S. to obtain their education. Some, from Reynosa, have been sent as far away as Austin to study. Now that Pan American University has integrated with the University of Texas System, they no longer have to be sent so far away.

My goals now are to obtain my degree, to work for a while (perhaps in Mexico in a maquiladora), and to save money to open my own business, if at all possible, in Mexico. I don't feel like I'm close to reaching my goals; first I have to graduate from college. Right now, I work part-time at a high school, but I haven't come across any students that have had experiences that are similar to mine, because I really don't have a way of knowing if they face the situation.

MEXICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: THEORETICAL AND FORMAL FLOW CHART


ELEMENTARY
MIDDLE
Special Programs
Pre-primary
Primary
Job training
Elementary Terminal
Middle
Basic Secondary
Upper Middle
Upper
Post graduate
indigenous primary
open primary
pre-primary
formal primary
special education
job training
open secondary
secondary for workers
technical secondary
general secondary
open upper middle
technical terminal upper middle
technical non-terminal upper middle
general baccalaureate
normal school
open upper
technical upper
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Source: International Institute for Educational Planning, Report No. 59, 1986

On the future...

Perhaps I'll move back to Mexico after I receive my degree. I would like to work and live in Reynosa. The lifestyle is too different here, so I don't like it too much. Now I usually spend my extra time at home, but if I were in Reynosa, I would go out with my friends. I could stay out later. Who knows, maybe if I'd moved here before I was 18, I would feel differently.

If I return to live in Mexico and become a businessman and a family man, I would prefer that any child I have attend school in the U.S. Even though the curriculum is not standardized like I think it should be, I would involve myself in my child's education to obtain what is necessary. If I had no choice and had to educate my child in Mexico, I would of course try to get the best education available. I don't think the public school system is best in Mexico, so I'd have to enroll my child in a private school.

On technology...

Although computers are not used by students in all the Mexican schools, some primary schools do have computers. Private schools for the most part are equipped with computers, but in the federal schools, only some are equipped. Friends from Mexico have told me that many secondary schools—at least the majority in Reynosa—are equipped with computers.

On the border as constant and symbol...

About a month and half ago I was crossing back to the U.S. from Reynosa with my family, and my mother had forgotten my sister's documents. She wasn't allowed to pass through, but some of us were allowed to. So, we retrieved my sister's documents from our house in the U.S., and returned to the immigration office on the border. After providing the proof, my sister was allowed passage. It isn't easy for us to cross the border.

I hear in the news that many immigrants from Mexico don't want to return to Mexico, that they don't desire it anymore. But I don't think for them it's got a lot to do with the hassle of going back and forth across the border. Those who have been here longer probably don't want to go back—those who belong to the second or third generation, that is. Many of my generation don't even like to cross into Reynosa.

I think it depends more on if a person is properly documented to be here. I like to travel in Monterrey and Mexico City. My parents, for example, are thinking of returning to Mexico. I know that I can cross back and forth anytime I want, but I still come across some problems at the border crossing.

On my immigration—in retrospect...

The move to the U.S. has been a good thing for me and my family. I don't know that I'd change anything, but things have changed for us. For example, my mother never worked outside the home when we lived in Reynosa; she was a housewife. She prepared our meals and did everything for us. Here, she has had a job for two or three years outside of home. Before she was available to us for help. Now I am responsible for the younger children's well-being.

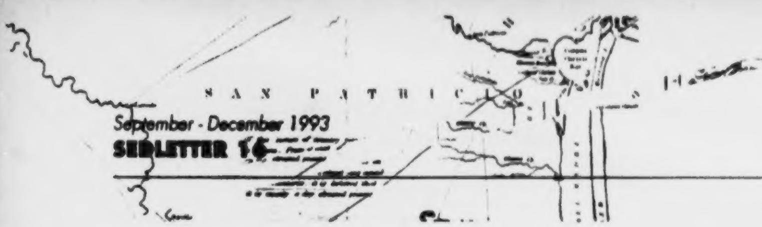
Our lifestyle is different here. But it depends on how you look at it as to whether that lifestyle is better or worse than in Mexico. In Mexico, my father was the only one that worked to provide for the family. Here, it is more difficult for him to do so. Several members of my family are working here just to survive. In Mexico, my father's job was sufficient since living expenses are much lower. My father's work on this side therefore earned dollars which buy more in Mexico. But here, one dollar equals one dollar rather than several pesos. So food is much cheaper in Mexico. My father has to work from early in the morning to late in the evening, but it is necessary to keep his job.

"I came to learn."
—Border student
(Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

It has not been easy for any of us. But our accommodations here are much different than what we had in Mexico. I have no regrets because we have acquired many things—including material things.

On sharing words of experience and wisdom...

In college, I don't get much chance to talk with students because my job is preparing the laboratory for experiments for the teachers. I prepare chemicals, solutions, and the equipment, so I don't get the opportunity to talk to the students very often. But if I were to give a student in the U.S. from Mexico who didn't like it here any advice, it would be "Don't waste the opportunity that is being given to you." If the student said he loved the U.S. and hoped never to return to Mexico, I'd say "*sigue adelante*," keep going forward; continue. **SEDL**



(continued from page 11)

because the pool of children from resource-rich families has not increased as quickly. Further, although less than 10 percent of all Mexican students reach college, and half of their number drop out, public universities consume a third of the federal education budget. While parents of children in federal, public schools must directly buy everything except textbooks and the teacher's time, college students at the public universities in Mexico continue to attend school free of charge.

The larger issue of Mexican educational reform, however, remains much more complex and much less obvious. To understand the educational revolution for which Mexico seems poised in the wake of NAFTA, we must first study the structure of the Mexican education system. Based on the tenets of the Constitution of 1917, for the past 75 years Mexican education has been idealistically advanced by the government to promote social equality, to increase the number of capable human resources for economic development, and to inculcate political stability. To gain a greater understanding of the current state of education, and to comprehend the profound changes some educators and politicians in Mexico espouse, a grounding in the history of the Mexican education system is imperative.

As the culmination of the Mexican Revolution, the Constitution of 1917 was, in simplest terms, a written promise to amend past injustices. According to a number of historians, the election of 1910 brought 30 years of alleged corruption and oppression by the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship to an end. Díaz had manipulated all the sectors of the Mexican population to stay in power while, at the same time, exacerbating the socially and economically divided classes. He had developed the Mexican economy for the benefit of foreign interests and the elite of Mexico at the expense of the masses. Initially, the revolution focused on Díaz as the common enemy, but, soon after his exile, it quickly evolved into a class war. Societal differences, which were rooted in Mexico's colonial past, inflamed into an armed struggle. In the end, countless citizens were dead but the Constitution of 1917 created the hope of a new, united Mexico.

A strong sense of Mexican nationalism was thus imbued into the fabric of the constitution. In essence, the post-revolutionary Mexican educational system was a bold thread in the fabric of Mexican nationalism. It was a system fashioned, in part, to instill a sense of place and pride in Mexico's citizens that would enable them to progress in the modern world with a viable identity. In this light, the importance of education has never been minimized in Mexico. But the means of maximizing educational benefits for the whole of the country economically and socially has been questionable. Since the character of the education system has been a well-intentioned aim to please all the sectors of society, more often than not, the system has fostered contradiction, disappointment, and frustration.

Specifically, modern Mexican education can be divided into two periods: between 1917 and 1940 and from 1940 to the present. In the era immediately after the Mexican revolution, the leaders of the new government focused on implementing a socialist idealism in as many facets of society as possible, and the education system was one major facet. Since 1940, a moderate approach, echoing the ambitions of the ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI), has prevailed in the government, and, along with it, the education system. In 1917, in order to amend the inequalities of the past, Mexico wanted to promulgate the idea of an "Hombre Nuevo" or "New Man" made-up in equal parts of all the cultural influences that had impact on Mexican soil. The Mexican state pursued a common education for the common good of all. The constitution institutionalized a free and secular education system under the control of the state. Primary education was compulsory, and secondary education—though not mandatory—was available, if not as accessible. Further, the focus of education was not limited to children. Aware of the severe lack of education among the majority of the adult population, the state tackled the problem by initiating an adult education program.

Some early notable achievements included: implementation of a literacy program for all ages; an increase in the number of schools, student enrollment and teachers, particularly in the rural areas; and the introduction of meal and health programs for schoolchildren. All of which sound remarkably similar to the reforms proposed this year. In fact, during the 1920s and 1930s educational historians Noel McGinn and Susan Street contend, "Mexico was one of the most innovative countries in the world with respect to education." The educator who was responsible for most of these achievements was noted philosopher and poet Jose Vasconcelos. He believed "that the state and society had the obligation to educate and improve the lot of the masses"—a notion that was quite consistent with the egalitarian aims of the Revolution.

Appointed Secretary of Public Education in 1920, Vasconcelos elevated the importance of having a vital educational system to a level that has not been seen since. Armed with the Constitution of 1917, Vasconcelos extracted funds from a Mexican Government that was struggling to deal with the aftermath of the Revolution to create "the most generous budget for education in the history of Mexico." The impact of Vasconcelos' achievements is such that a dialog about reforming the education system today is impossible without a reference to the "educativa Vasconcelista." But, the "educativa Vasconcelista" didn't take shape out of thin air.

In 1920, Vasconcelos inherited a primary school system that had its roots in an 1874 decree that proclaimed primary education compulsory. The impetus for the decree was Gabino Barreda who had been the director of the National Preparatory School in Mexico City from 1867 to 1878. The primary education system installed at that time was weak because it had been mired in a curriculum content controversy between conservatives, who were backed by the Catholic Church, and liberals, who embraced a "positivist" philosophy that theology and metaphysics are earlier imperfect modes of knowledge, while "positive" knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations as verified by the empirical sciences. The philosophical issue was never fully settled, and therefore a true compulsory primary education system was never fully realized. To Vasconcelos this was probably just as well since he didn't fully agree with Barreda's positivist philosophy anyway.

In a lecture prior to 1920, observes UCLA professor John Skirius, Vasconcelos "argued that the all-pervasive empiricism of Barreda's educational system, and some of its determinist and naturalist assumptions, restricted human creativity, as well as its philosophical and spiritual ideas." Given Vasconcelos' background as a poet, this criticism could not have been surprising. Yet he didn't dismiss all of Barreda's accomplishments. He respected Barreda's views in the sciences, and astutely incorporated them into the education system he developed. Indeed, Vasconcelos and Barreda had one important goal in common: *Both wanted to make education accessible to the public, particularly the peasant population, in order to promote social mobility*. As noted, Barreda failed. Vasconcelos, with the weight of his influence, successfully institutionalized compulsory

A Palito B[illegible] family in a temporary home the farmworkers built for themse[illegible] [illegible] white hinds [illegible] miles south of Rio Bravo and the border. (Photograph courtesy [illegible].)

primary education, but the social classes still remained divided.

Secondary education, on the other hand, was not compulsory; but its development was still greatly influenced by Vasconcelos. In 1915, Mexico adopted John Dewey's high school system, which emphasized commercial and vocational skills as the official form of secondary education. By 1919, Skirius notes, another secondary school opened in Mexico emphasizing "the humanities, Christian values, and the comprehensive, classical European education." Vasconcelos and many others like him objected to the school's foreign, therefore un-Mexican, origins. In 1920, these two schools of thought were combined and modified with qualities and ideals that Vasconcelos embraced to create a new secondary education system. Ezequiel Chavez, Vasconcelos' protege, implemented these reforms into what we know as the high school level of education in Mexico, the *preparatoria*.

The preparatoria was a five-year term that included courses in literature, social and exact sciences, as well as art, music, and physical education. Under Chavez's administration, students were given a choice of study programs based on their career plans, and Vasconcelos urged that school reforms be geared to a variety of student intellectual capacities and socio-economic needs. He promoted education as means of improving the ability of the masses to equip themselves with practical knowledge to survive in a post-revolutionary economy and to lay the foundation to further their education. Through education he hoped to create an "Hombre Nuevo" that transcended social classes. In this respect, the impact of the "educativa Vasconcelista" went beyond education into the realm of applied philosophy.

Rising from this educational foundation, Vasconcelos envisioned three pillars referred to collectively as "los tres misioneros" (the three missionaries) that promoted and supported a Mexican culture and created a sense of nationalism: *the teacher, the artist, and the school.* According to Vasconcelos, each pillar had to work simultaneously to transmute the desired effects. In the early '20s, for example, Vasconcelos recruited then-unknown artists, such as Diego Rivera, David Siqueros, and Jose Orozco, to aid in the promotion of the Mexican culture through their art. These artists produced paintings and murals that are considered masterpieces today largely because they are unmistakably Mexican in character. Thus, Vasconcelos' imprint on Mexican education and culture will likely remain an inextricable part of Mexico.

In 1924, Vasconcelos resigned as Secretary of Public Education to protest what he saw as the corruption and fraud that ushered in the presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles. Under Calles, Mexican education continued with the same socialist rhetoric, but the level of intensity that Vasconcelos had inspired diminished. The education budget was reduced since the need to pacify the army demanded a quarter of the national budget. In spite of the cutbacks, primary schools were being built in the remotest regions of Mexico and literacy programs continued with limited success. In 1925, notes Skirius, reforms in the structure of secondary education were introduced: "The traditional five years of preparatory education were divided into a secondary school of general curriculum (comparable to the U.S. junior high school) followed by a two-year preparatory school offering specialized curricula for those planning to attend the university." Restructuring created more options for graduates from the secondary school. There, "students were introduced to trades as possible careers." Secondary education reform was the highlight of the Calles administration's role in education. It increased the ability of the general population to attain a higher level of vocational education.

With the election in 1934 of President Lázaro Cárdenas, many anticipated that the education system would maintain the status that Calles had set. Instead it developed a greater role in state matters. From 1934 to 1940, education took on a socialist profile that was closer to the intentions of the Constitution of 1917. Cárdenas' education system

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aimed to break down the influence of the Catholic Church over the schools, and to develop values to promote equity in the distribution of wealth and labor. In this way, education would build up the sense of national culture that would in turn nurture a society of political and economic independence. Investment in the Mexican education system increased, averaging 16 percent of the total government budget during the Cárdenas administration. More schools were built in rural and urban areas, more public libraries were constructed, and there was a reduction in the illiteracy rate. Changes in curriculum were also implemented. Sex education and national history were introduced, and more emphasis was placed on the sciences. Cárdenas was also instrumental in developing a system of polytechnical institutions that became central to the training of adult workers. Teachers were an integral part of this education system and enjoyed a high level of professionalism. The role of the Mexican teacher in the 1930s was primarily as a professional educator, note McGinn and Street, who was "concerned with the improvement of teaching methods and materials." Teachers often served as consultants for change in the curriculum, and "their professional status was reflected in an average salary three times the minimum wage for industrial workers."

The Cárdenas administration completed its term in 1940, and simultaneously marked what is generally considered the most successful era in the history of the Mexican education system. The focus of education as a contributor in developing human capital for the well being of the individual and the state—in that order—shifted in the 1940s. Carlos Torres of UCLA and other Mexican education historians contend that the Mexican education system thenceforward supplied the means for the PRI to stay in power in that education became a form of political capital in promoting political stability and a sometimes inefficient economy.

Since 1940, the education system has, however, continually expanded. More schools were built in the rural areas and in the larger cities suffering from the affects of urban migration. Expenditures for education also increased. But these efforts did not, and have not, translated into an efficient and equitable education system. The system has not been able to keep up with demands of a growing population and the production sector.

Also beginning in the 1940s, the Mexican economy expanded and diversified, and the Mexican government adjusted what it considered to be the proper resource sectors to continue the trend. The state nurtured a capital-intensive form of economic development even though its greatest resource was human. The education system was developed and promoted for years as a means of preparing the population for the labor market, which would ensure social mobility. But the form of economic development pursued by the government rendered the education system inefficient. More people were entering the labor market than the economy could absorb. Therefore, unemployment rose. Fewer students were able to complete their basic education because they were too poor to attend school. Even a "free education" represents a significant cost to the poor, remind McGinn and Street.

The Mexican state responded with two separate plans, in 1959 and 1982, to reduce the dropout rate in the primary schools and to prepare a labor force by further expanding the education system. Again, this was done without regard or a wary reference to the national economy. Both plans, deduce McGinn and Street, failed since it was thus "evident that educational growth was not responding to the needs of the production sector." What the policy *did* succeed in building and promoting was nationalism as a reason for reforming education in the late 1950s and early 1970s. In short, education was a policy that appeased the demands of the burgeoning population.

For the sake of nationalism, education was further centralized. From the 1950s to the 1970s, a uniform national curriculum and a national textbook took shape and were made mandatory in the nation's local schools by the central government in Mexico City. Teachers were given little latitude in adapting individual or regional interest or differences into their teaching, and the Mexican state controlled the curriculum content.

Historically then, the Mexican state has focused on who benefits from education. Before the most recent set of educational reforms were first voiced by the Salinas de Gortari Administration in 1988, the well being of the individual was superceded by the well being of the state. From that perspective, the newest educational reforms, are truly revolutionary in the Vasconcelos vein.

Unanswered questions, open fences, new rafts:
Respecting the spirit of the river's flow

> *At last Patricio said, "Consider this, Señora. Musicians are to be found everywhere in Mexico. They are polishing their instruments and waiting for you to call. . ."*
>
> **—from Harriet Doerr's *Consider This, Señora***

SEDL sees the impact of NAFTA on education along the border and beyond as a challenge and an opportunity. Obviously, the trade agreement adds momentum to the creation of an international community that stretches for miles on both sides of the fast-fading "official" border. This community would undoubtedly see bilingualism and biculturalism as essentials. To render reality from the vision, SEDL Center for Language Minority Populations Projects Director Dr. Betty Mace-Matluck suggests that educators first abandon hard-line assimilationist attempts to "teach the immigrants English and help them adapt to U.S. society." Indeed, perhaps the most significant lesson this investigation has taught SEDL staff is that to respond to NAFTA's infusion of hope along the border pathologically—as one might define a problem instead of an opportunity—is to disrespect the border's natural currents and thereby resist and undermine their power. The plain fact is that immigration and its impact is *not* a problem. If educators respond to NAFTA and the border issues and concerns touched upon in these pages with mere remedies designed to maintain the status quo, schools and the promise of education—as something invaluable that no one human being can deny another—will undoubtedly perish in the flood.

Second, although there are many bilingual education models on the books, Mace-Matluck favors methods that ensure "two-way developmental bilingual education for all students" so that native-born and immigrant students reach their full bilingual potential. Attaining that goal will require coordination and collaboration between students, teachers, school personnel, education agencies, and policymakers on both sides of the border. Fortunately, NAFTA policy already has the head start in light of preliminary discussions between U.S. and Mexican national Education Secretaries. Some areas that will need consideration before the spotlight afforded NAFTA is required elsewhere on the national front seem to be: 1) building a focus on curriculum alignment between the U.S. and Mexico, 2) teacher training and exchange, and 3) technology in education. In keeping with its philosophy of collaboration, SEDL continues to gather information and ferret out research on the intricacies of the Mexican educational system as it relates to that of the U.S. Under direction from its Board of Directors, SEDL is also seeking ways to use its convening strength to bring educators from both sides to a well-prepared table at the river's edge where border currents coincide to consider all of this.—————————————**SEDL**

The Mexican sky was excessive . . . Wider than others, it stretched over people . . . as they darted on bicycles between trailer trucks and buses and hurried hand in hand, whole families strong, across divided freeways.

Coming next issue: Part 2 of our special report on U.S./M [illegible] investigates the promise and the challenge of curriculum alignment [illegible] education, international teacher training and exchange efforts, and [illegible] Mexico and the U.S. We'll look at the questions begged by the [illegible] ask you as educators to consider all this and more.

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1993-94 SEDL Minority Interns

Power between the towers: SEDL Minority Interns (l-r) Joey Achacoso, Harvetta Robertson, and Wanda Grady Ward forge places for themselves between doctoral studies at The University of Texas *(l)* and Educational R&D at SEDL *(r)*.

Joey Achacoso wants to see schools improve their track record among three-to-eight years olds. Harvetta Robertson sees herself helping teachers become better at service delivery to students and families. And, Wanda Grady Ward wants to separate the programmatic wheat from the chaff by ensuring that educational programs are evaluated and held accountable.

All three of these young researchers won an opportunity to put their professional preferences in action through SEDL's Minority Internship Program (MIP). Throughout its history, SEDL has demonstrated a strong commitment to educational equity through the participation of minority students in educational R&D. From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, SEDL conducted a doctorate-level internship program that produced 15 doctoral graduates. During the years since then, SEDL has collaborated with Austin area colleges and universities to arrange limited internship and practicum experiences for students. But for the past three years, SEDL's commitment has been translated to a Minority Internship Program supervised by two 20-year veterans of educational R&D: Dr. David L. Williams, Jr. , Vice President of Resources for School Improvement at SEDL; and Dr. Lonnie Wagstaff, MIP Coordinator and M. K. Hage Centennial Professor at The University of Texas College of Education. With funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Williams and Wagstaff work to enhance the participation and success of minority students in the field of educational research and development. The MIP offers graduate students a stipend, the potential for course credit, and opportunities to contribute to the work of SEDL—an established educational R&D agency.

A cohort of three to four interns is chosen to participate in the MIP each year of its funding. The fourth internship period extends from June 1, 1994 through May 31, 1995. Interns engage in a variety of activities at SEDL for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Stipends vary according to the period of the internship (which can range from three to 12 months), but are generally based on a half-time work week for $1,000 per month for 12 months. Work agendas and schedules are established individually, depending on each intern's interests, experience, and career goals. All interns however participate in a range of SEDL activities, including:

- developing research-based products,
- providing training and technical assistance activities in the field,
- planning and conducting evaluations,
- documenting and reporting program activities, and
- participating in state, regional, or national conferences

To be eligible for a SEDL minority internship, a doctoral-level student must:

- be a U.S. citizen of African American, American Pacific Island, Asian American, Hispanic, or Native American Indian origin;
- be currently enrolled in a doctoral program in one of the academic fields of education, social work, educational policy, or a related field (e.g., psychology): (In addition, 24 semester hours of course work toward the doctoral degree must be complete, and the student must be in good standing with the university.)
- demonstrate interest in an educational research and development career;
- submit three letters of recommendation from professors in his or her current field of study, including academic program or dissertation adviser;
- submit an official transcript of graduate work completed, and finally
- submit the official application to the right of this page.

MINORITY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY
211 EAST 7TH STREET
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-3281
(512) 476-6861

OFFICIAL APPLICATION FORM (1994-1995)*

1. ______________________________
(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial)

2. Social Security Number ______________________________

3. ______________________________
(Home Street Address) (Telephone Number)

4. ______________________________
(City) (State) (Zip)

5. ______________________________
(Work/Office Street Address) (Telephone Number)

6. ______________________________
(City) (State) (Zip)

7. Race/Ethnicity (Please check one of the following)

African American ____ Asian/Pacific Islander American ____

Hispanic American ____ Native American Indian ____

8. Graduate Academic Major: ______________________________

9. Academic Adviser: ______________________________

10. Department or School: ____________________ Telephone: ______________

11. University: ______________________________

____
(Address) (City) (State) (Zip)

12. Please attach an official transcript of all graduate work completed to date. Your application will not be considered without this document.

13. References: Three letters of reference are required from professors with whom you have studied or worked, including your academic adviser. Please ask your references to send letters to MIP at SEDL.

a. Name: ______________________________

Title: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

Telephone Number: ______________________________

ONCE COMPLETED, **PLEASE CUT** ALONG DOTTED LINE AND RETURN TO: Dr. Lonnie Wagstaff, SEDL Minority Internship Program, 211 East 7th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-3281.

MINORITY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION *(continued from previous page)*

b. **Name:** ____________________

Title: ____________________

Address: ____________________

Telephone Number: ____________________

14. **Based upon what you know about SEDL and the MIP, what types of programs and activities interest you most?**

____

____

____

____

____

____

15. ** **The length of time for an Internship can be short or long, depending upon your interests and needs. Three months is the shortest period of time for an Internship and 12 months is the longest.**

Please indicate your Internship time preference below:

______ 3 months - stipend is $2,000 per month with a 40-hour work week
______ 6 months - stipend is $2,000 per month with a 40-hour work week
______ 9 months - stipend is $1,000 per month with a 20-hour work week
______ 12 months - stipend is $1,000 per month with a 20-hour work week

16. **If selected, can you begin the MIP on June 1, 1994?**

Yes ______ No ______ Proposed start date ______

I have completed the information on this form and wish to be considered an applicant for the Minority Internship Program at SEDL which starts on Wednesday, June 1, 1994. All of the information provided by me on this form is true and/or factual.

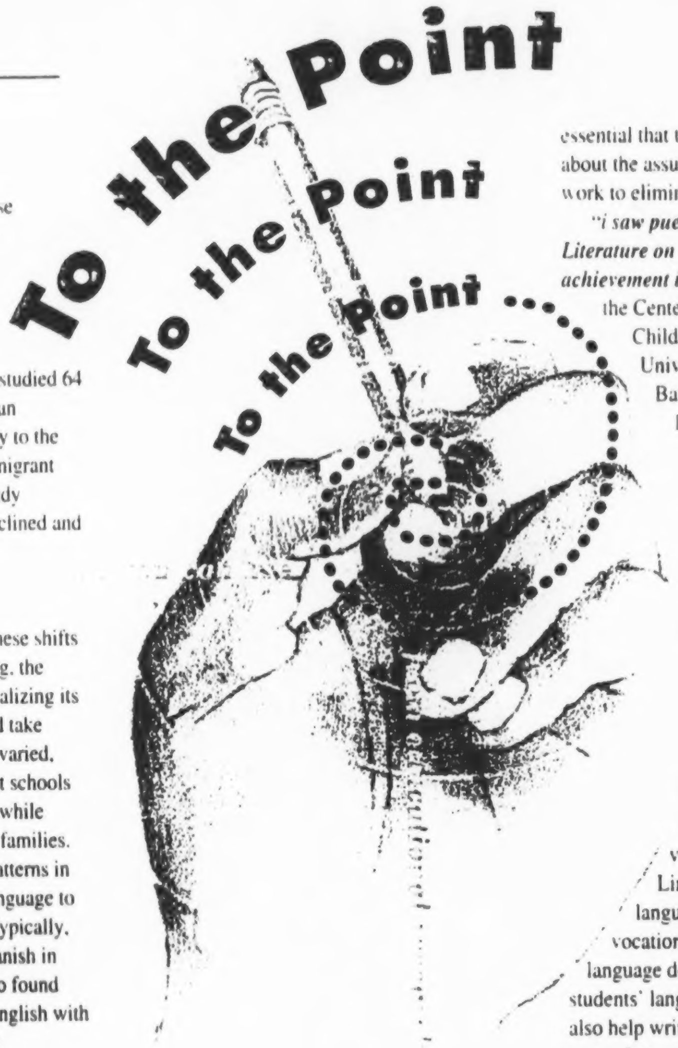
Signed ____________________ Date ____________________

MAIL YOUR APPLICATION TO:
Dr. Lonnie Wagstaff
SEDL Minority Internship Program
211 East 7th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-3281

***The deadline for submitting this application is February 1, 1994. To be considered, an application must be delivered to SEDL before 4:00 p.m. February 1, 1994, or bear a postmark indicating it was mailed on or before February 1, 1994.**

****NOTE: The usual length of time an intern spends engaged in ER&D at SEDL is one year. However, SEDL will consider shorter Internship periods (e.g., not less than three months and up to twelve months). In addition, SEDL will offer an adjustment of the stipend that is commensurate with the length of time to be spent in the MIP. Both the time frame and the stipend amount will be determined in the offer to the finalists.**

ONCE COMPLETED, PLEASE CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE AND RETURN TO: Dr. Lonnie Wagstaff, SEDL Minority Internship Program, 211 East 7th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-3281.



Bilingual immigrant families often lose proficiency in their native language and speak mostly English in as little as two generations, according to a report published by the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. The author studied 64 Mexican families in a largely Mexican San Francisco Bay Area community. Contrary to the belief that children in predominantly immigrant enclaves are not learning English, the study showed that their Spanish proficiency declined and their English proficiency increased from generation to generation.

The authors also found that despite these shifts toward monolingualism among the young, the community still stressed bilingualism, realizing its values and rewards. Views of who should take responsibility for retaining bilingualism varied, however, among families. Some thought schools should preserve dual language learning, while others believed that task was best left to families.

The study also revealed classroom patterns in which students and teachers used one language to support reading or writing in another. Typically, children discussed what they read in Spanish in English and vice versa. Researchers also found that children of Mexican descent used English with their teachers more often than with their classmates. Through the generations however, children generally used more English more frequently than Spanish with both groups.

Moving In and Out of Bilingualism: Investigating Native Language Maintenance and Shift in Mexican-Descent Children is available from the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20037 (cite order no. RR6), 14 pp., $4 prepaid.

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Economic, political, and cultural obstacles historically hamper the success of Puerto Rican children in school. But a new study concludes that educators can nurture success in Puerto Rican children by not only respecting the children's native history and cultural values, but also by examining their own assumptions and harmful practices as teachers. The study's author, Nitza Hidalgo notes that Puerto Rico has been exploited by other countries and has not therefore been able to determine its own future. That subordination continued, the author contends, as American businesses saw Puerto Rico as as source of cheap labor and enticed Puerto Ricans to immigrate to the U.S. for low-paying industry and seasonal farming jobs.

Similarly, as schools devalued Puerto Rican culture, Puerto Rican students experienced limited educational success. Schools traditionally don't value Spanish language proficiency, but seek to replace Spanish use with English. The school culture also conflicts with the home culture in that Puerto Ricans foster interdependency, cooperation, and respect for elders; schools traditionally underemphasize these values.

To help Puerto Rican students succeed, Hidalgo makes the case for schooling that taps the "richness" of Puerto Rican culture. But, she warns, cultural awareness isn't enough: "It is essential that teachers become more introspective about the assumptions and values they hold, and work to eliminate racist practices and policies."

"i saw puerto rico once"—A Review of the Literature on Puerto Rican Families and School achievement in the United States is available from the Center on Families, Schools, and Children's Learning, The Johns Hopkins University, 3505 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218 (cite Report No. 12), 54 pp., $6.20 prepaid.

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[illegible]

When English as a Second Language teachers teach vocational educators how students learn and use language, "effective vocational education become effective language instruction," claims a new report. ESL teachers can improve vocational educators' understanding of Limited English proficient student's language development by teaching vocational teachers which techniques boost language development and how to assess students' language proficiency. ESL teachers can also help write curriculum materials, use technical manuals to stress vocabulary and grammar, and check student comprehension of vocational materials and lessons.

On the other hand, vocational educators can help improve LEP students' comprehension and oral language use by asking students to give direction; answer questions; and use flashcards, illustrations, and labels. The researchers found that LEP students benefit even more from school support services, career orientation, personal counseling, and job preparation and placement. Texts that improve student literacy, supplemental charts, diagrams, and problem sheets, as well as classroom assistants who speak the LEP student's native language, are also invaluable resources for improving language skills.

Collaboration for Instruction for LEP Students in Vocational Education is available from the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Western Illinois University, 46 Horrabin Hall, Macomb, IL 61455 (cite Order No. MDS-157), 154 pp., $7 prepaid.

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SEDLings

Accomplishments, publications, and activities of SEDL staff members and associates

David L. Williams, Jr. served as a consultant with Board privilęges at the National PTA Board of Directors meeting in Chicago, Illinois; co-conducted *Planning for Change in Collaboration* with Norma Saavedra at the Regional Transitions Meeting in Oak Brook, Illinois; spoke to an Arkansas PTA meeting on Parent Involvement in Education; and served as an editorial reviewer to the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Association for Children International, and *Texas Researcher*. Deborah Jolly and Richard Tompkins presented *Funding for Rural Technology Efforts: The REA* at the International Society for Telecommunications in Education conference in Dallas, Texas. With Michael Sullivan, Jolly presented *Rural Communities Communicating: The Emergence of Two-Way Interactive Video in Southwestern Rural, Small Schools* and *Excellence in Rural Education Through Innovative Technologies* at the National Rural Education Research Forum in Burlington, Vermont. Dave Wilson has been elected chairman of the Communications Group of the Council for Educational Development and Research. Shirley Hord has been elected Chair of the AERA Special Interest Group on School Effectiveness and School Improvement. Hord also provided workshops in Houston, Abilene, and Austin on school improvement, leadership for change, and the superintendent' role in school renewal and reform. With Vicki Boyd, Hord presented *Culture and Quality: The Role of School Boards and Superintendents* at the Texas Association of School Boards/Texas Association of School Administrators annual convention in Dallas, Texas. Boyd also presented *Reawakening the School Culture: Leading the Renaissance* at the Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development annual conference in Austin. Marilyn Irving presented papers on systemic change and culturally responsive science teaching to Louisiana Mathematics and Science educators and the National Science Teachers annual convention in Kansas City. "Solar Power-Up," one of Karen [illegible]'s science partnership projects was nominated by the Texas State Energy Conservation Office for a 1994 National Energy Award. Glenda Clark presented *Sharing Successful Projects in Mathematics and Science* and *"Leadership" Isn't a 4-letter Word: Developing Mathematics and Science Leadership for the Next Century* at the Arkansas Statewide Mathematics and Science Leadership Conference in Conway; *Making Connections: Patterns in Native American Lives and Culture* to K-4 teachers at Whitehead Elementary in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma; and *SEDL Projects that Support Equity & Excellence in Mathematics* with Maria Torres at the Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching in Dallas. Marilyn Fowler published an article on experimenting with textiles in science classrooms in *Connect* magazine, and presented science skill development workshops to educators in San Angelo and Del Rio, Texas. Maggie Rivas presented workshops on instructional strategies, cultural awareness, utilization of teacher assistants and cooperative learning in Seminole, Garland, Lamesa, Amarillo, and Austin Independent School Districts. Rivas also presented an intensive session on *Integrated Language Teaching* at the Texas Association of Bilingual Educators conference and turnkey workshops on the subject for Regions VI, VII, XVI, and XVII; she was also keynote speaker for a Parent Conference in Los Fresnos, California. Linda Casas presented *Cooperating Wholly through Language* to ESL teachers in Garland, Texas. Jackie Palmer assisted in demonstrating the computer version of the Laboratory Network Program's newly-released *Catalog of Alternative Assessments* (for IBM and Macintosh) during the National Secretary's Third Conference on Mathematics And Science Education: Improving Assessment in Washington, D. C.

Jim Rosenbaum, *Technology Specialist, Office of Fiscal and Technical Services*; Sharon Adams, *Information Services Specialist, Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST)*; and Pat Guerra, *Research Associate, Services for School Improvement.*

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SEDLETTER

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory News

Inside

SPECIAL REPORT:
Border Issues in Education
(Part 2)

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Border Issues in Education

(Part 2)

Not to go back, they have told me no.
No one has to be returned.
No one.
No one has to pay to be more than the others.
And this instant
will be a light between two windows,
a trip through the glass border.

—translated from J. A. Soldevila's collection, *La Frontera de Cristal* *(The Glass Border)*

Toward schools as reflections—each of the other—at the river's edge

"I cannot see myself if you do not see me; I cannot see myself if you do not privilege me with your gaze. I will never be complete without you."

—Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, quoted in Anthony Day's "Carlos Fuentes: Mexico's Provocative Broker Among Cultures Uncovers a New Vision"

If you've witnessed children discovering themselves in the mirror for the first time, then consider this: *As the U.S. and Mexico become more familiar with each other's systems and ways of seeing schools, that child-like sense of wonder, fright, excitement, and intimate possibility at seeing ourselves as others see us, could—and perhaps should—prevail.* Now imagine children and families in schools on either side of the Rio Grande, on either side of *La Frontera* or the Border, completing and sustaining each other with a shared vision of cooperation in the next century and beyond.

To some, such a scene sounds too farfetched, too idealistic in light of both nations' decades of indifference to each other. It's understandable to avert one's gaze when confronted with the tremendous social problems each country faces without the other, and, as some immigration foes contend, *because of* each other. But look again to the child in the looking glass.

If you still don't see the point of envisioning possibility, understand that neither nation stands to gain more than the other. As a land of immigrants, the U.S. has been the future for millions from other countries—as have Mexico and Latin America. Picture, for example, the title scene in Carlos Fuentes' much-talked-about, forthcoming story, "The Glass Border." A window washer from the "radicalized" present is flown from Mexico to New York City as cheap labor, only to sight someone working diligently at a desk on the other side of the window he is washing. Each longs to know and understand the other—and therein lies their humanity.

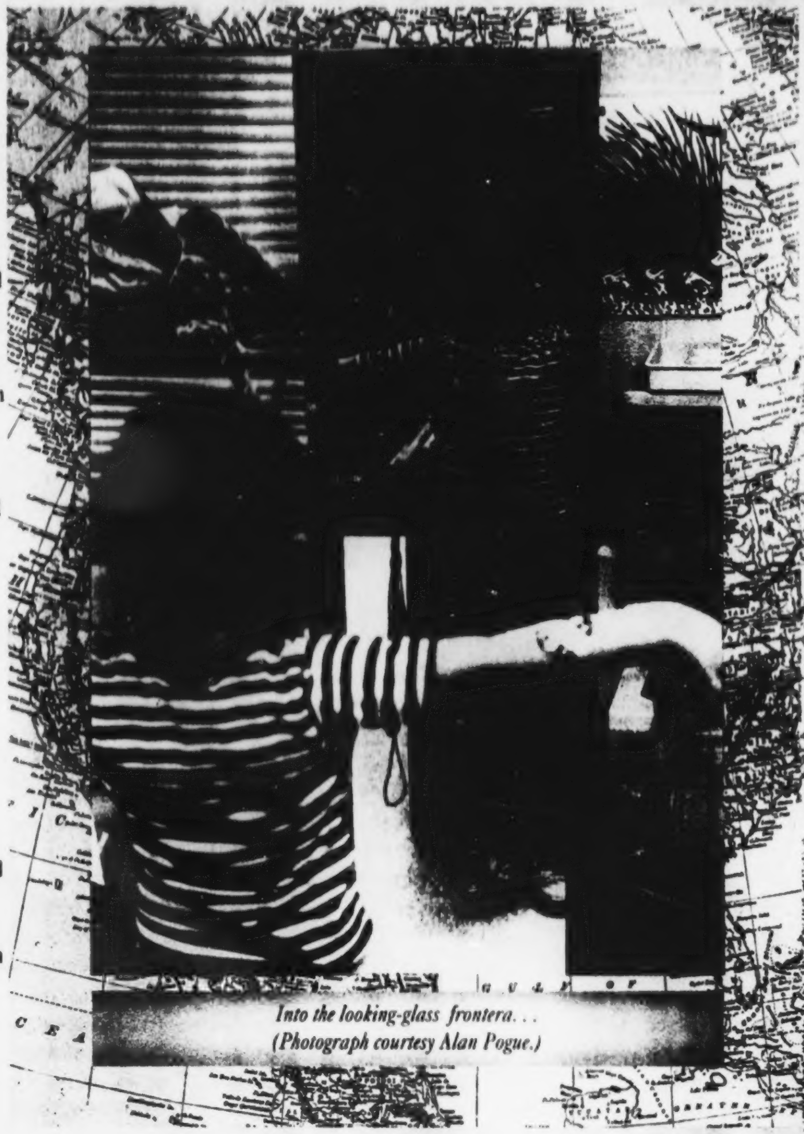
With this series, *SEDLETTER* hopes to help readers gauge the currents, and begin seeing the relationship of U.S./Mexican schools from Fuentes' "glass border" perspective. As he so eloquently remarked during a keynote address at the February meeting of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) in Los Angeles: "We need more glass borders—not barbed wire ones."

In Part 1 of our report on education along the Mexico/U.S. border, we examined the paradox of immigration and free trade and offered a "back-door" introduction to the Mexican educational system through its history. We asked you to view the issues and the options as we had—with an eye to the U.S. and Mexico as equal collaborators in the educational future of the Border region. We also hoped to tempt you with what some say rests at the heart of the commentary and eloquence that have made Fuentes the "leading Mexican interpreter of Mexico in the U.S." He envisions the border—*La Frontera*—as "a world more real than that which the eye alone can see"— a world in which seeing into and understanding the other side of the glass is not only called for, but instinctive. As neighbors, educators in the U.S. and Mexico need first to be able to see and gauge their sameness as it is reflected in the grand river that splits the Rio Grande. Of course there are differences; there will always be differences. But we asked you as readers and educators to consider the sense in forging an alliance of strengths along the edges of the Rio Grande. Common-sensically, we suggested (as have others) that such an alliance could be capable of transforming a continental divide of difference into one that mirrors the infinite potential of learning—each one from the other.

In Part 2, we take a seat at the schoolhouse steps to witness education comings and goings first-hand. From this new, more positive border checkpoint, our hope is again to evoke currents of possibility that may have been most visible in the October 1993 binational agreement between the U.S. Department of Education and the Mexican Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP). We'll look more closely at K-12/primaria-preparatoria curriculum alignment as its creators navigate the same divergent currents that have thus far stumped binational university-level curriculum aligners along the Border. We'll examine the issues surrounding teacher training and staff development in schools within both countries that are the most obvious candidates for English/Spanish bilingual education programs. And perhaps most urgently, we'll cast an eye and an anchorline microphone to schools that are the locus for social service provision for their communities on either side of the border; to the schools' need for cooperation, support, and sustenance on either side of the border, and then most particularly, to the case for special education reform in both countries.

As we foraged for research and at-the-source-perspective tempered by expert commentary, we derived two sets of questions as context: First, since the needs of children and families come first to educators everywhere in the world, how do those needs reveal themselves on the Border? And how are they perceived, reckoned with, and finally met by borderlanders? Does the merging of the need to know, to understand, and work for improvement reflect the humanity called for in Fuentes' "glass border?" Second, we wondered, "What do our respondents—the people on the border front-line—see as the benefits and the chances of and for cross-border collaboration?"

To find out, we talked with teachers and administrators in the Laredo (Texas) United Independent School District and teachers and educators across the border in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Since both districts serve similarly low-SES populations largely from Mexico, we wanted to see how school staff on either side of the border process the drudgery and hope that come with poverty and promise. At times, we found the truth blaring, obvious, bare-boned and exposed for anyone who cared to examine it. At other bends and junctures, we encountered subterfuge and hidden indicators: like the upper middle-class Mexican citizens who buy condos on the U.S. side of the border so their children will be educated in English-speaking schools. We also wanted to know the reasons why—exactly—U.S. teachers and administrators who are born and raised less than a stone's throw from Mexico have never crossed to talk with their Mexican educational counterparts—if only to compare notes on the best strategies to work with the same children and families. In each instance, we found ourselves looking to the border—glass, water or some magically surrealistic fusion of the two—as a very human and organic place that educators must recognize as such if the Frontera and its schools are to live up to their potential and promise.


Into the looking-glass frontera. . .
(Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

Curriculum alignment . . . for the niños and niñas nurtured en la frontera

Both nations are committed to inform American and Mexican officials and teachers who supervise migrant education of the curricular changes that have occurred in the two countries so that migrant programs may be more coordinated and effective.

—from Addendum III of the Memorandum of Understanding of Education between Mexico and the United States of America, June 21, 1993; Tom Payzant, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, US; Estaban Moctezuma Barragan, Undersecretary of Education Coordination, Mexico

You know how people are, how we all of us are wanting our kids to get ahead and be somebody? Wear a white shirt. And a tie. Sure.

—from Tomás Rivera's "Picture of His Father's Face"

For years, educators on both sides of the border have talked about portable report cards that travel with migrant students. This education *curriculum vitae* would help ensure the teaching of similar academic content in similar chronologies. Students and their families who crisscross the border frontier would not, as a matter of course, fall behind and have to be extensively reevaluated at each crossing, subjected to unnecessary remediation, or otherwise stifled by an official line on a map, the shifting sands on the bottom of a river, or the glass border that renders one country as close as itself to the other, but no less a mystery. Of all the educational innovations and ideas targeted to the border, the one that makes the most sense aligns the curriculum in both countries, across grades, one to the other, so that students can move with ease from U.S. to Mexican schools and vice versa as the livelihoods of their families require such mobility.

But exactly what has happened since word of binational agreements between the U.S. and Mexican Education Secretaries first breezed back from Mexico City in the days just prior to the U.S. Congressional vote on NAFTA? The U.S. Department of Education says lots. Key staff have met at least once in Los Angeles in February, responsibilities have been assigned on each side, and plans solidify daily for the U.S. Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) binational curriculum analysis conference slated for Fall, 1994. Although Eugene Garcia, director of OBEMLA, has no new federal money for the binational collaboration, he is nonetheless optimistic of what can be accomplished in the post-NAFTA months. "We need a cadre of trained professionals to implement curricular changes," he says, adding that with NAFTA, "we will likely move faster and more formally" than otherwise.

Through the Mexican consulate in Austin, Texas, SEDL obtained a set of new textbooks and curriculum materials recently adopted by the Secretariat of Public Education in Mexico. SEDL Vice President of Language Minority Populations Projects, Betty Mace-Matluck, and her staff perused the materials and found them rich in integrated learning, whole language, and cooperative learning philosophies. The textbooks seemed to fly in the face of the widely held, now-antiquated myth among educators in the U.S. that Mexican teachers routinely encourage little more than rote memorization from texts that have been pre-ordained by a distant, underfunded, and indifferent central government in Mexico City.

With this fresh perspective in mind, SEDL traveled to Nuevo Laredo to meet with a group of 23 teachers, principals, school administrators, and staff development professionals. *(See meeting highlights pp. 9-11.)* There teachers shed light on the textbook situation in Mexico first. Although Carlos Alberto Torres, Professor of Education at the University of California in Los Angeles, and others, note that Mexico's free textbook creation has been completely overhauled in the past few years but remains controversial and highly political, it is the teacher selection of the best texts of those offered by the national publishers that is most instructive. "Before the textbooks are released," reports one Nuevo Laredo educator, "the authors visit some of the schools to introduce the texts to the teachers." Since free texts are provided to primaria (elementary) students, the real problem is finding a sufficient supply of the chosen texts to meet growing student populations in border communities. The teachers talked of the difficulty obtaining books and materials for the higher levels of schooling, known in Mexico as secundaria and preparatoria, where not only the differences between public and private education, but also those between the poor, middle, and upper classes are exacerbated. At the secundaria level and beyond, textbooks must be purchased by the student. Educators in Nuevo Laredo, for example, explained that the SEP approves three to four textbooks per class per subject and the teachers meet to choose which textbooks will be used in their school. "The difference between public and private schools are in the economic conditions and in the materials," a Nuevo Laredo teacher reported. "For example, in my school, we have a need for textbooks in history and geography, specifically a recent popular edition in history. We needed to find a way to seek funding to obtain these texts. So we did what we could to get hold of it. Whereas in the private schools the kids can probably have the books in hand the next day, in the public schools, it may take a week for some children to get a hold of the textbook. If we are lucky, half the kids may have the textbook in a few weeks. For the other half, we have to go out and buy the books out of our own pockets since we are not allowed to make monetary loans to the students."

Further, educators along both sides of the border note that in these early stages of collaboration too much of the effort has so far been centralized to the national capitals of both countries, rather than to the border area where the issues are most tangible. And, as before the binational education agreement, some educators question the choice of politicos and policymakers—instead of educators—as the stewards of change in the classroom. Some also charge the media with under-reporting the educational aspects of NAFTA, even after its passage. "Very few people know about the binational education agreement," observes Ramon Alaniz, Director of Texas A&M International University's alternative teacher certification program in Laredo. "The public knows a little about the business implications. But the media don't seem to have picked up on the education alignments as much as they have the business ones."

Even curriculum modifications that pertain to business exchanges between Mexico and the U.S. aren't being addressed in the early grades, say the Nuevo Laredo teachers. "We need to modify the regional contents of the curriculum," reasoned one teacher. "Because of our proximity to the U.S., our requirements should be different. We should teach awareness of differences in weight measures, kilos to pounds, etc. that are critical to daily transactions between our countries. This isn't contemplated in our current programs."

Given the lack of public awareness and the differences in national standards, to wade deeper is to discover that beach heads of activity have in fact been building up for years that may do more to strengthen the Border region curriculum alignment than any governmental accord alone could promise. Since the early 1990s, California groups have planned for and worked to hone international report cards that students could carry into or out of either the U.S. or Mexico to inform teachers of exactly where they are academically in a number of academic subjects. Likewise, Dr. Francisco Perea, under the auspices of one of Mexico's 11 consulates in Texas, has devised an "apples-to- apples" course description and alignment between Texas' core curriculum and that of Mexico and several other Latin American countries.

Work like that of Perea is still rare, but it is being done—as is the isolated, often demonstrational business of getting international institutions to agree to a set of standards by which students from many different countries can be equitably evaluated. In September, for example, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that students from Garland High School's gifted and talented program had qualified for an International Baccalaureate offered through an office in Geneva, Switzerland, to high schools in 75 countries worldwide. While Garland was only one of 144 such schools in the U.S., the Geneva coordinators had succeeded in securing approval from a number of international universities to recognize the international diploma. Harvard University, for one, agreed to accept the diploma as college credit.

Requirements for the International Baccalaureate, though rigorous, are also accessible. Students must 1) pass courses in World literature in their native language, or the language the student knows best; 2) achieve fluency in a second language; 3) complete classes with an international bent in history, geography, economics, philosophy, psychology, social anthropology, organization and management; 4) complete classes in experimental sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental systems; 5) complete coursework in mathematics theory and practice; 6) take electives and courses in art, computers, the theory of knowledge, a third modern language or culture; 7) submit a 4,000-word final essay; 8) volunteer 150 hours to charitable, educational, or arts organizations; and finally 9) pass a battery of multiple-day tests that are graded by educators in other countries. Though specialized and limited to an elite few, the international diploma and its organizers may provide international educators, administrators and policymakers with some tips on aligning curriculum at the elementary/primaria and middle school/secundaria levels.

Indeed, at the higher education level, as Border expert Jorge Bustamante reported in Part 1 of this series, alignment of curriculum is much farther along. Two years ago, the binationally funded Education Exchange Commission anticipated raising $100 million to finance educational exchange programs and research in Mexico. At the time, the Commission's $3.4 million budget already financed 305 educational exchanges between the U.S. and Mexico—250 of which involved

Class is in at this temporary school in Palito Blanco, Mexico, an agricultural encampment outside of Rio Bravo along the U.S./Mexican border. The school in the community named for the "little white limbs" that are their primary building material, is federally supported—complete with a federally certified teacher. (Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

Mexicans studying in the U.S. Colegio de Frontera in Tijuana, of which Bustamante is President, claims to have successfully forged a master's level consortium of universities in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada to which qualified students from any of the three countries can go to take classes and pursue advanced academic credentialing in International Business. "The program prepares them for the kind of internationally competent work that lies ahead after NAFTA," Bustamante explained in a phone interview, fresh from a meeting between education officials from the three countries. "Our students can act as liaisons for corporate clients or in their own interests as international business people."

Although Bustamante cautions that education at the K-12 level is radically different historically, philosophically, and operationally between the two countries than is university-level education worldwide, lessons learned by Ramon Alaniz, who directs an alternative teacher certification program at Texas A&M International University, may be enlightening. "I know our program is teacher training on its face, but we ran into curriculum alignment right away," he explains. "The program required some form of curriculum alignment, because we had to equate the Mexican professional degree—the licentura—to a B.A. One of the problems that we have is meaningful communication with our Mexican counterparts. Frankly, we do not speak the same language when it comes to talking about different systems in education. While I may be fluent in the native language of Mexico, we have systems that are totally different. It really doesn't matter that you understand the language in the context of the citizen; we don't understand the *professional* differences. And that's the understanding we need to collaborate on education."

Despite the communication difficulties, Alaniz's alternative certification program has made progress. "We teach training," he reports, "and right now we have two programs in cooperation with Tamaulipas (Mexico), including a Master's level of international bilingual education." But Alaniz is the first to concede that neither the state of Texas nor any other state in Mexico has been able to put together a real agreement where curriculum exchange actually occurs. "Students either study here or there; not both. They receive a degree from here, or from there; not from both at the same time. It takes people and lots of time to actually align curriculum," he maintains.

Alaniz, who has worked with colleges and accrediting institutions in Mexico for four years, also notes that for every three course hours earned in the U.S., six hours must be taught and earned in Mexico's colleges. Yet for years, Mexico has had a teacher education system that requires fewer years of education—even when the actual areas of training and subjects covered are very similar. He also believes the countries are treated differently in the world—perhaps because of economic stature, perhaps because of racism.

Though he feels that the differences in curriculum and course alignment can be worked out with time, Alaniz also notes that the U.S. hasn't invested much time and money in working with Mexican education until fairly recently. "We've been working four years to align the certification processes in Mexico and the U.S. for the benefit of our students," he reminds us, "but the barriers to what we're trying to do are still very real. Just look at travel, it's easier to travel half way around the world than to Mexico."

Firing handles on international teacher training and certification: More pitfalls, far more promise in the premise

> *"You know, Mexico is a very formalistic country. The degree in Mexico is like this thing on the cup. If people don't have handles, they don't know how to pick you up. They'll burn their hands."*
>
> **—Carlos Fuentes, quoted in Anthony Day's "Carlos Fuentes: Mexico's Provocative Broker Among Cultures Uncovers a New Vision"**

> *A renovated force of teachers, better trained, with better living conditions, faithful to its traditions, will be the best educational platform for the future.*
>
> **—Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of Mexico, in his presentation of *The Mexico We Want by 1994: 1989-1994 National Development Plan***

Clearly, one reason for the K-12 lag behind binational university-level curriculum development may lie in the differences in teacher credentialing in the U.S. and Mexico. To get some notion of the complexity of this issue, U.S. educators need only look to stateside policies that limit teacher certification to single states. As one teacher put it, "just because I'm certified to teach in Texas doesn't mean I can move to California and get a job."

In the case of the U.S. and Mexico, the levels of complexity increase in number and in depth, but neither makes them irreconcilable. Until recently, teachers in Mexico typically attended teaching schools called *Normals* and were assigned from and by the SEP or its branches in Mexico City to teaching positions throughout the country. Completion of the course work virtually guaranteed employment; and after a two-year stint in rural schools, many of the teachers could and would move into the urban areas that most saw as superior appointments. Since teachers in Mexico make on average 500 pesos (roughly between $250 and $300 U.S. dollars) per month, many work more than one shift in more than one school. Schools in Mexico may be either federally funded, state-funded, or privately owned by the church or individuals, and teachers may work in any combination of levels (elementary/primaria; middle and high school/secundaria; or junior college, trade school/preparatoria) subject to any of the three funding options. Such flexibility and willingness to work is one way that "educators can make ends meet" in a country that has seen the real income of its teaching corps fall by 60 percent since the oil bust of 1982, explains Ingeniera San Juanita Elsa López Cabrera, Center Director for a regional educational services center in Tamaulipas, Mexico.

Although teachers in Mexico make up the largest union in Latin America, they still had to strike in 1989 to increase their wages and regain some of the professional stature that had been lost in and after the oil bust and subsequent peso devaluation of the 1980s. After an internationally publicized siege of the SEP administration building in Mexico City, the teachers union (commonly known as the SNTE) succeeded in ousting union leader Carlos Jonguitud Barrios. In the process, they also won concessions—namely term limits on union leaders, and increased funding opportunities for the individual professional development of teachers. For example, Ingeniera López Cabrera says teachers can now win $1,000 awards for innovations that are evaluated by their students and administrators on the secondary education level, and by a committee of peers on the primaria level.

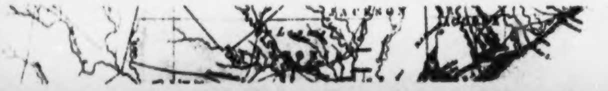
Since President Salinas de Gortari declared that "the challenge of education is keeping with the challenge of national development," teacher credentialing in Mexico has benefitted from flux as the nation decentralizes education and health service and re-evaluates its educational infrastructure. According to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) World Education Series 1982 edition, teacher training and accreditation programs at Mexican colleges and universities are officially validated as: a) SEP, b) free or independent, or, c) private with programs that have federal validation. A degree of *Escuela Normal* roughly translates to upper-secondary/pre-university training, while *Escuela Superior* usually translates to university level or a baccalaureate degree. AACRAO also explains that student teaching experience may show up as such on the transcripts of Mexican teachers, but it may have been completed as part of a social service component. Further, titles such as *licenciatura, título de profesor de educación,* and *título de maestro de group de primaria* translate as a B.A., a four-year degree program, and a degree from an upper-secondary institution respectively. Likewise, the *cédula* is "a professional license or credential" issued by the SEP that could be in either secondary or elementary education. The *carte de pasante* "usually indicates that all coursework for the degree has been completed but the individual may be lacking an exit exam or social service requirement" rendering the holder degreeless. And, *título* translates most accurately as "degree" and can be used at university or other levels.

In the years since 1982, however, at least one national decentralization decree, modernization within the universities themselves, and a Mexico teacher's union emphasis on enhanced professionalism have helped to update the old credentialing standards. According to a 1988 survey conducted by Susan Rippberger, "since 1984, the federal government has upgraded teacher licensing requirements to include a bachelor's degree and university pedagogical training." The result is a system of teacher training and staff development that is based on "change and national identity"—the two basics upon which Salinas' stated *Vision of Mexican Development* rest.

Sewing shoes fit for saints: Exchanges teachers along the border say they need to succeed

> *The teacher was happy. Poor wounded woman!*
> *Her smile was a way of crying with goodness*
> *over the rotten and embarrassing sandal.*
> *And in the wearer she saw the distinguished*
> *flower of her own saintliness.*
>
> **—from Gabriela Mistral's poem, "The Rural Teacher"**

> *If I stare at the eyes of the saints long enough, they move and wink at me, which makes me sort of a saint too.*
>
> **—niña narrator in Sandra Cisneros' *Mericans***



> *In the area of teaching the English and Spanish languages, the two nations agreed to explore the possibility of using Federal funding to support a teacher exchange program between the U.S. and Mexico and to take advantage of the experience of the university consortiums which have been developed in the border region. . . . In the area of teacher education, both nations are committed . . . to develop specific objectives in the area of joint training.*
>
> **—from Addendum III of the Memorandum of Understanding of Education between Mexico and the United States of America, June 21, 1993**

> *Not to go back. . .*
> *Walk in search of the ship, of the best offering*
> *to the Great Wave.*
>
> **—from J. A. Soldevila's *La Frontera de Cristal***

The headaches and impasses caused by the logistics of establishing curriculum sharing, teacher training, and staff development options between the U.S. and Mexico touched upon so far by Alaniz and others are, however, only the tip of the iceberg. Inherent in most if not all university-based teacher credentialing exchange programs is the one-way terminus. International exchange programs typically offer some form of visitation to a foreign university, and many may even offer a limited (six week period) of instruction in the other country. But few if any of the programs offer credentials from two universities, nor do they guarantee acceptance of earned credit hours by both universities. Further, the exchange programs on the U.S./Mexican border currently lean toward the U.S. for credentialing with no promise of reciprocity. For example, Mexican teachers are encouraged to continue their educations toward an advanced degree in a U.S. border community at a U.S. university—even though these hard-earned credentials may mean nothing to the Mexican education officials by whom they are employed. U.S. education students, on the other hand, are not as vigorously encouraged to seek out and take similar courses or seek credentials at universities in Mexico. Call it racism, call it unequal recruitment, call it shortsighted, but the inequitable treatment continues.

A student from the Mexican town of Acuna (border twin to Del Rio, Texas) argues against the location of a toxic waste facility in Del Rio. Not only did the two towns come together to fight the plant, but the Texas legislature listened to the young student and those who stood behind her. Now Acuna and Del Rio are both cleaner for their fight. (Photograph courtesy Alan Pogue.)

Why do Mexican teachers take course work that may not be recognized as advanced in Mexico and may not be sufficient in itself to secure a U.S. degree? Some, no doubt, plan to immigrate to the U.S. where their language skills and U.S. credentials will provide increased opportunities. Others see the courses as continuing education, as building strength in a profession to which they are committed. Thus to misread the desire for teacher continuing education as solely a means of financial gain would be both cynical and unfair. Far more prevalent a concern among the Mexican teachers that *SEDLETTER* talked with was the notion that the problems faced by teachers of recent immigrants on the U.S. side of the border were more similar to Mexican teachers' experience than not. As one principal and teacher from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, put it, "We are the producers of education. In this respect, I think the problems we face are very similar on both sides of the river."

Specifically, it's the question of 'Which tasks do I do first in so little time?' that has plagued many teacher exchange efforts between countries in the past. "Teachers need to know what their colleagues are doing if they are to be able to effectively educate children and families," offers Texas

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A&M's Ramon Alaniz. "But too many Pre-K through 12th-grade teacher programs offer participants little more than cultural tourism." One Mexican national, who has watched poorly designed teacher exchange and training efforts, even called the placement of a teacher from the U.S. in a Mexican classroom "cruel" if the teacher hasn't been schooled on the systemic and philosophical differences in Mexican education. And, in a recent interview, U.S. Department of Education migrant education director Ramon Ruiz suggested that American schools may need to find ways to certify teachers from migrant workers' home communities in order to avoid the kind of fruitless exchange programs that allow teachers to visit each other's countries for short periods.

Yet such strategies are precisely what concerns Texas educator José Cárdenas, who has long noted the virtual lack of "a large pool of trained teachers competent in the student's native language and a virtual void of instructional materials in languages other than English." In his article for the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), Cárdenas blames the dearth of bilingual/ESL teachers in the U.S. on two ill-conceived strategies employed by Texas policymakers in particular: 1) attempts to train English-speaking teachers in Spanish as a second language rather than recruiting teachers from the pool of native language speakers in the region; and 2) the massive importation of Spanish-speaking teachers from other countries who were not familiar with the students' vernacular. The first strategy attempted to make English-speaking teachers bilingual in 100 hours of instruction, which was a gross underestimation of the time and proficiency necessary in second language learning among adults. The second strategy, Cárdenas maintains, remains problematic because teachers born and trained in other countries where only Spanish is spoken lack sufficient English skills to deliver bilingual instruction. Further, they sometimes wind up trying to teach students to be trilingual in English, Spanish from Spain, and the student's vernacular.

Indeed, the most visible—and the stickiest—distinction between teachers on the U.S. side of the border and those in Mexico has to do with language. While administrators like Romeo Romero in Laredo Independent School District maintain that teachers need to be "literate bilingual" to teach effectively along the border, others complain that teachers may know only conversational Spanish and yet still carry a bilingual certification from accredited colleges and universities, thus making such pre-service institutions co-culprits.

For years, SEDL and a cadre of state education agencies in the U.S. and Mexico have engaged in attempts to increase the numbers of bilingual and ESL teachers available in isolated areas of the state where growing numbers of limited English proficient students reside *(see* SEDLETTER *"MRC to Train Needed ESL Teachers," Jan.-Feb.1993)* .The only interests not served by such alternative certification strategies proved to be those of teacher unions in the U.S. Union members at first frowned upon the programs because, they reasoned, offering credentialing convenience and incentives to teachers who spoke another language circumvented their own marketability. Some educators may even recall the flurry of media attention in 1992 to stipends given bilingual teachers and other professionals.

Meanwhile, teachers in U.S. *colonia* schools like Juarez-Lincoln Elementary in El Cenizo, Texas—a half-hour's drive from downtown Laredo, and a five-minute crossing of a rough Rio Grande from Mexico—call for pre-service training to help them deal with low student experience levels and the effects of poverty. If there were such exchange programs, the colonia teachers might benefit from training and staff development options in Mexico that prepare Mexican teachers, so the Mexican teachers claim, "to teach and attend to five different grades simultaneously, which is a necessity in rural areas."

Students between nine and 21 years of age who test at three years or more below their "age-appropriate grade level" are "low-literacy" students according to Catherine Walsh who coordinates the New England Multifunctional Resource Center. But to teachers in El Cenizo along the border, such students are too typical to label. Walsh and the other experts explain that poverty may have barred the low-literacy students from formal schooling in their native countries. Others may not have had the opportunity to read or write in their native language, and still others may have lived in areas so isolated that school was an unavailable luxury. These students don't have much time to tell teachers their stories—even if they wanted to remember the hardships. What they focus on is catching up, which can be an overwhelming and frustrating task for teachers who feel they literally must do "everything at once—yesterday," comments Elsa Arce, United ISD At-Risk Coordinator for El Cenizo.

While the teachers at El Cenizo say they'd prefer pre-service training to help them deal with these students' low level of experience, Walsh offers these helpful strategies among others: 1) establish ungraded classes of no more than 15 students to allow for self-paced instruction and minimize the stigma that over-age students typically face; 2) make available individualized learning plans where teachers set goals that either lead to GEDs or high school diplomas—whichever the student chooses; 3) develop independent study, community-based projects, and internships as alternative ways for students to earn credit or show competency; 4) offer classes in the native language with the same teacher for all academic subjects to maintain consistency; 5) start a summer program to help promote language, cognitive, and social development of students in a "fun" less-structured setting.

Rachel Sing, in her report on successful and growing programs that serve unschooled immigrant students, suggests integrating low-literacy immigrant students in regular bilingual classes in which teachers use cooperative learning strategies. Cooperative learning in practice allows students to be grouped and group themselves in knowledge- and strength-sharing ways, rather than through remediation that focuses on their differences and singles out their weaknesses.

Carolyn Bernache, a teacher who developed a low-literacy curriculum in Prince George's County, Maryland, advises her counterparts nationwide to "give your students plenty of time. There are so many pieces that need to be in place before the light goes on." But the teachers in El Cenizo say there is no time to give to students who are predestined to fail the state mandated tests that not only make or break their immediate academic futures but make or break school funding and accreditation standings as well. Though they may agree with Bernache that low-literacy LEP students shouldn't spend their first year learning "functional English" that doesn't help them in their academic courses, the teachers are first to see their students' struggle. "I think the state is making a big mistake testing student who are recent immigrants and deprived second-generation immigrants," explains an El Cenizo elementary teacher. "All they know is the teacher says you can't go on. Then you're given a TAAS test . . . and you're told, 'Look, you're not the same; you can't make it.' Combined with the poverty and deprivation, all of this causes that child to fall farther and farther behind, telling himself, 'I'm just no good; I can't make it.' I'm not going to say it's discriminatory to test these students, even though it is. They're not ready, and they're just made to feel incompetent."

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FREEING THE WORKING TEACHER

through educational and social reforms in the U.S. and Mexico: Teachers in the border city of Nuevo Laredo share their perspective

This new legal framework recognizes and reaffirms what the teacher has done, is doing, and should be doing as a direct promoter, coordinator, and agent of the educational process. In effect all the regulations that pertain to education reaffirm that the national profession of teaching is the champion in the formation of all children that will inherit the responsibility of protecting the sovereignty and fostering the prosperity and social equality of Mexico.

— Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, as Mexico's Secretary of Public Education, now PRI presidential candidate

. . .

Not to go back, no.
A fire has been liberated
from its chains

. . .

— Untitled, J. A. Soldevila's *La Frontera de Cristal*

In Tamaulipas, there are 10 Normal (teacher training) schools. An overproduction of teachers exists as if a chain had snapped.

— Teacher in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico

A wrong conclusion that one might draw from the National Latino Survey is that Mexican Americans who are determined to assimilate will become . . . disconnected from Mexico. . . . What's likelier is that the United States and Mexico will become more like each other. Goods, information, and people will flow as never before between San Jose and San Antonio, between Guadalajara and Nuevo Laredo. Like the line that quarreling school boys draw in the dirt, the U.S.-Mexico border will disappear as the two antagonistic nations become nation-friends. As assimilation occurs, these cities and their peoples will become more like each other. You can already see the melting on the border.

—Joe Rodriguez, "Assimilation into American Melting Pot is Painful"

The invitations were beautiful. The paper used for the invitations, the black ink used to write them. . . it was dried ink; all that had to be done was to add a little water and it was as good as new.

—from Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*

For the better part of this century, the teaching profession in Mexico was imbued with almost missionary importance and, unfortunately, was reliant upon a missionary's faith and few other resources. Bluntly stated, teachers along the border in Mexico and the U.S. have had to learn to make do with what they have, but increasingly they're calling for—even demanding—help to ensure the success of their mission. Teachers in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico are therefore heartened by recent Mexican national educational reforms and the leeway they have been given to implement them in the classroom.

In the first part of this series, we adamantly maintained that Mexico is certain to resist any one-sided educational solution for the border states or for immigration concerns as a whole. Aside from the human tendency to balk at being told by another what to do or how to change, Mexican decentralization reform efforts are beginning to prove themselves. To meet its economic agenda, the Mexican government had to decentralize in order to become less top-heavy. And particularly along its northern border that comes closest to the U.S., the nation has begun to do just that, by relinquishing policymaking power more and more to state and local education officials. If the scant literature and eyewitness accounts can be believed, Mexican education is slowly being reformed.

The U.S., by the same token, has undergone waves of reform effort for the past 20 years since the watershed publication of *A Nation At Risk*. Findings released this year by the Educational Research Service Alliance for Curriculum Reform surveyed 3,380 high school principals and found the state-side take on systemic reform to be piecemeal and slow, "haphazard," "spotty," and therefore not the restructuring ideal that had been envisioned by reformers in the U.S. Although Mexico's most recent call for education reform originated in 1988 with the Salinas government, and has therefore been in place for a shorter period of time, proponents are no less eager to implement changes than their counterparts in the U.S. Amendments 3 and 31 to the Mexican National Constitution, which were passed in 1993, guarantee access and education for all students to at least eight years of public schooling. Before the Amendments, Mexico's children were guaranteed only six years of school.

The teachers *SEDLETTER* talked with in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, just across the Rio Grande, saw curriculum reforms as key to much-needed professional autonomy and thus key to school improvement. As one teacher put it, "The teacher will continue to be what he has always been, the spark plug that ignites the class. The teacher ignites the content of the textbook with attitude, experience, direction and direct participation in the class. That's the true intention." Another at the table noted: "The (education) programs that were in effect a few years ago were very structured. Teachers were given step-by-step instructions to reach the prescribed objective, and evaluations were based on how well the teachers followed these instructions," she recalls. "The worry among the teachers was that creativity was stifled: the program was too limiting. . . . With the recent modernization of the education system, the teacher is given complete responsibility for the teaching process. Now, the teacher is responsible for structuring, planning, and determining what to do and how to do it," she explains, adding that good teachers had always done this "in one way or another."

Such views of systemic educational change through reform dovetail with the international observations of SEDL change expert, Shirley Hord. "It's a trend I've noticed in England and other parts of the world," explains Hord. "Where there are systemic structures that are centralized, the national shift and emphasis moves toward decentralization. Where the structures are decentralized, the change is toward centralization. Either way, their impetus is always the same: decreasing resources. Consistently then, Great Britain just moved to a national (centralized) curriculum, and Mexico is fast decentralizing."

Profesora Norma Rivera Martinez, of Nuevo Laredo, concurs with Hord's observation: Centralization "promotes bureaucracy and any governmental help is usually too little too late. But it is good because it permits control and unifies the national criteria (standards)."

Like their counterparts in the U.S., Mexican educators have settled on a four-part process through which they hope to guide and direct their restructuring/retooling effort. According to the Nuevo Laredo teachers we talked with, key concepts include **adjustment** ("We analyze a topic; if any adjustments are needed, then changes are made."); **basic content** ("This works hand-in-hand with adjustment, if necessary, in that only one topic or subject is examined for proper content and relevance."); **existing programs** ("Contents are universal, but advances in content areas reach us from a variety of sources. The advances are incorporated into the program of study and the textbooks."); and finally **new plans and programs** are subjected to the same examination. Although the Mexican teachers we talked with don't expect to see the real implications of their reform efforts in the classroom until the 1994-95 school year, they've worked within the concepts for a year already and many remain optimistic: "We are in the process of modifying our programs after almost 20 years of not making any adjustments. We are in the midst of trying to improve the quality of education in Mexico, . . . its usefulness and effectiveness." And, just as in the U.S., they want to see if the changes are "to the liking of the Mexican teacher."

Another recent reform measure for changes in Spanish curriculum was also welcomed by the teachers we spoke with in Nuevo Laredo. In the early 1970s, transformational grammar theory found its way into Spanish grammar content in Mexican schools. In February, the Mexican Congress reportedly decided to return to more traditional Spanish teaching, by emphasizing writing, reading, spelling, and rhetoric. This change pleased the bilingual grammarians because, as they explained, "In grammar, sentence structures share more commonalities between English and traditional Spanish than with the modern Spanish that had been taught since the 1970s."

Even the most bothersome of disparities—that between Mexico's public and private schools—has been subjected to equalizing reforms, say the Nuevo Laredo educators: "At the root of the recent reforms is the need for better quality of education at all levels. Private schools are businesses where education is sold; and logically, if I want my business to succeed I need to have a good, quality product." Such Demming-esque philosophy not withstanding, the educators in this Mexican border community echo their counterparts across the Rio Grande when they move beyond current reforms to persistent problems with their training. "What I have found to be a problem with the education of the teacher," observed one thoughtful educator, " is that the plan of study doesn't necessarily correspond to the reality found in the classroom. Some of us have noted this and we have talked about approaching the normal schools to incorporate the experiences of the teachers in-service for the benefit of current students enrolled in the Normal schools. Perhaps they can experiment with some of our ideas that we have over what should or shouldn't be part of the education of the teacher."

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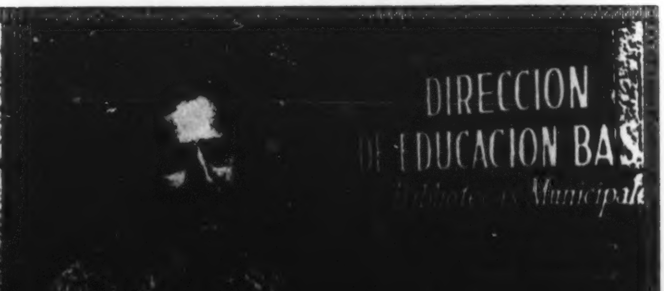
Other concerns include an overabundance of trained teachers in some border communities like Nuevo Laredo and not enough in the interior of the country. Recent graduates of teaching colleges in Mexico resist moving to the small, remote, rural townships, and wait instead for openings in city schools. The problem has persisted for years, and Mexican education officials have for at least the past decade, sought to alleviate it with a course through CAMP (translated as, Continuing Education and Training for Teachers) that trains urban graduates to teach in rural areas. "The program is called *Escuela Rural Unitaria,*" explained a CAMP instructor. " It hasn't been modified, as far as I know, in years. In two weeks, we are supposed to train an urban teacher in how to form cooperatives and other necessities in the rural areas. I taught this course even though I didn't know anything about the rural lifestyle. I studied the contents, and I gave it my best effort. But I could only teach what I had read, which isn't enough. This problem arose when the Normal schools for rural areas disappeared. They disappeared because no one wanted to move out there and for political reasons which I don't get involved with. The difference between the urban areas, such as Nuevo Laredo, which are considered modern in Mexico—though perhaps not the same level of modernization found in the U.S.—and the Mexican countryside is quite considerable. Our Normal schools have been acclaimed for many years for their excellence in teacher training, but for urban-schools—not for rural teaching assignments."

Escuela Rural Unitaria and its history point to another area of concern among the Mexican teachers we talked with, that mirrors the concerns of teachers in the U.S.: *lack of follow-up and continuity in reform programs.* Like too many teacher reform and efficacy-building attempts the world over, when change is not immediate, the next innovation is mandated for immediate trial. "We have 40 hours or more worth of courses that are offered to the teachers on various topics," reported a Mexican teacher, " but again there is very little follow-up and little sense of permanence. Some of the courses offered are suggested by the teachers on topics that they require more information about in order to implement, but only if enough interest is generated. We try to comply, but we are sometimes involved with other activities that distract from the teachers' needs. Yet, I do think that things are changing. In the last two years, we've seen more of an effort to update our programs than ever before; we're beginning to reach a point of solid ground with many of our programs. Things are changing." **SEDL**



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Mexico education researcher Susan Rippberger is one of few researchers to survey teachers in Mexico as recently as 1988. Although she interviewed teachers in the central and southern states and in Mexico City, their responses are still largely congruent with teacher perceptions along the border. Like the teachers in Nuevo Laredo, the disparity of resources between public and private schools was their most common perception. Further, because the heavily U.S.-influenced border has decentralized informally in ways that the central states have not seen as beneficial, Rippberger's interviewees were much more attuned to disciplinarian, authoritarian philosophies of schooling. Although they reported that the SEP regularly offers eight to 10 days of teacher inservice training in educational psychology, pedagogy, creating inexpensive teacher-made materials and other topics that the teachers had themselves requested, the 40 teachers Rippberger surveyed reported the sessions were often "canceled for lack of interest or participation."

When similarities are brought to the fore, teachers on either side of the border wanted more options to deal with the inequity produced by poverty and unequally shared resources. In Mexico, the strategy seemed to be to gain more professional stature through professional classes and ever-advanced credentials. In the U.S., overwhelmed colonia teachers asked for more pre-service training so they could better handle the reality of poverty and its effects on students and teaching once they were mired within it. Either strategy, they say, would give them more durable shoes in which to stand—to say nothing of exchanging their students' poverty-worn sandals for a stronger pair.

Language learning through bilingual education: Living within and loving the mother tongue we cry in the womb

> *English should be offered at all schools in every level. It should be initiated at the preschools. We can't climb up a ladder on the fifth or sixth step. We need to start on the first step. . . . English should be considered a second language for all of Mexico.*
>
> **—Nuevo Laredo educator at SEDL sampling, March 3, 1994**

> *"Ah, doña Elena, always so clever. And tell me, have you thought about where Pedro will work in San Antonio?"*
> *"He can start as an accountant in my cousin's company; he wouldn't have any problem, his English is perfect."*
>
> **—from Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate***

> *". . . Consider the rich opportunities for understanding cultural and linguistic variation afforded by bilingual education programs. The essence of the relationship of language, mind, and society can be found thriving in this microcosm."*
>
> **—from Kenji Hakuta's *Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism***

More than 30 years ago, linguist Noam Chomsky announced that language was innate in humans and that the grammatical faculty was borne in and born with the child. Last month, Chomsky's colleague Steven Pinker, who now directs the M.I.T. Center for Cognitive Neuroscience, published *The Language Instinct*, in order to bring Chomsky's findings—that are more applicable to today's language debates than ever—to the masses. One of the most important of Chomsky's discoveries was the "black box" for "universal grammar" production. Chomsky could only allude to this linguistic box as a theory, but neurosurgeons can now pinpoint it as "in and around Broca's area, on the left side of the forebrain." Pinker calls language innate to humanity partly because embryonic infants "react instinctively to the melody, stress, and timing, of the mother's native speech." Though the child comes into the world with these instincts for language operational, between the ages of 18 months and three years the children are fully able to acquire language. Thus, Pinker concludes, our linguistic roots are in the genes, although there is no specific gene—just as there is no one gene for any human part as complex as language learning or the working of the heart. Perhaps most interesting, Pinker maintains the 4,000 to 6,000 languages spoken, written, and otherwise used in the world today are far more similar than they are dissimilar. And it is this linguistic universality of language and its acquisition by each of us, that Chomsky exposed, explored, and named "universal grammar."

Chomsky's research, as interpreted by Pinker and others, is but one basis for bilingual education, but it may well be the most essential. If responding to our mother tongue is instinctive, why—or maybe the better question is how—can schools of anyone else disallow its use? In her book *Thorough and Fair: Creating Routes to Success for Mexican American Students*, Alicia Sosa joins a chorus of bilingual education researchers who have repeatedly shown that placing limited English proficient (LEP) students in English-only classrooms to learn English (a process which usually takes newcomers from four to seven years) before they have developed their native language sufficiently, stymies the development of higher-order thinking skills and conceptual abilities in either language. Sosa, Jim Cummins, and others maintain that if students whose first language is not English are given an opportunity to develop conceptual skills in their first language first, these students can then easily transfer them to English or any second language. Sosa shows the importance of realizing that bilingual instruction must be sensitive to the transitions immigrant students are required to make. Students who exit sheltered English classrooms too soon, for example, find themselves under pressure to "read to learn," rather than "learning to read" which will have been emphasized for years prior to their exit. By citing a variety of studies, Sosa outlines the attributes of a successful program targeted to helping Mexican-American students succeed in school:

1) Effective bilingual teachers ask Mexican American students to contribute to the topic that is to be learned since these students carry with them "funds of knowledge" or cultural practices and perspectives that help households and communities to get ahead and even thrive.

2) Successful language teachers not only teach their students to be aware of the social rules and connotations in various languages, but they also "model" various language expressions, and "explain idiomatic expressions" along with their origins.

3) Teachers must work to reduce the risk factors that contribute to disproportionately high drop-out rates among Mexican Americans; namely, LEP student over-representation in special education classes and under-representation in Gifted and Talented Programs, along with the accompanying low teacher expectations for language minority students. Virginia Vogel Zanger, President of the Massachusetts Association of Bilingual Educators adds yet another high-risk area—tacit demands for native Spanish speakers to choose between the two languages.

Rosa Flores at the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) in San Antonio, Texas, reminds us of the important distinction between second language *learning* and second language *acquisition* in her

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treatise "DA Strategies: What Works in Second Language Instruction." She identifies second language acquisition as an acquired skill and equates second language learning to grammar rules that are learned prior to a student's internalization of the second language. By emphasizing acquisition skills in the classroom, Flores contends, students are guaranteed success.

Despite recent calls by the state of Nuevo Leon to begin English/Spanish bilingual education programs in 100 of its federal schools, bilingual education in Mexico has traditionally been reserved for Spanish/Indigenous language relationships. Since much of the Indian population still resides in the Southern states of Mexico like Chiapas, teachers along the Mexican border are more likely to teach English as a foreign language to students who typically come to school with some conversational English under their belts—given their close proximity to the U.S. border. Further, although some private schools teach English at the Pre-K and kindergarten levels, most Mexican students don't receive formal instruction in English until secundaria and preparatoria where they receive three to four hours of English per week in Mexican border schools. Teachers educated in the Normal schools may choose to take a four-hour English course in their last semester. One notable exception to that standard may be found in the Center for the Improvement and Modernization of the Teaching Profession. Forty-six of the Centers have been in operation nationwide for the past eight years, providing four-year degree plans with three terms of English. "Other programs don't offer English," advised a Nuevo Laredo-based employee of one such Center, "but ours does because much of the literature we use is in English, so we *do* have an interest in knowing English. Because we live on the border, we are exposed to a great deal of information in English. It is necessary to be familiar with English since it would be a shame to have these resources and not be able to utilize them."

But bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is arguably the most complex and multilayered issue on the border. It is an issue that extends at least as far as the Arkansas poultry industry, where towns a state away from the border have seen influxes of Mexican migrant workers increase ESL, LEP, and bilingual education need by as much as 50 percent in the past five years. Increasingly, demographic statistics show that the U.S. is fast becoming a nation of people whose mother tongue is not English. According to U.S. Department of Education data released in January, nearly 25 million Americans (or 12 percent of the nation's population) speak a language other than English at home, up from nine percent in 1979. Most of these non-English speakers were born in the U.S.; 58 percent of them speak Spanish; and almost 25 percent of the Spanish speakers are school-aged. Clearly, Spanish is, while perhaps not the *lingua franca* of the school, arguably the instinctive language familiar to far too many students for educators to ignore—particularly educators who see their students as half-full continuing learners, rather than half-empty remedial ones.

Language acquisition how-to: The two-way bilingual ideal

> *I'd like to send a copy (of the National Latino Political Survey) to every person who opposes bilingual education. Thanks in part to this (bilingual) program, this generation of Latino immigrants is learning English faster than any wave of immigrants in U.S. history.*
>
> —**Joe Rodriguez, *San Jose Mercury News* editorial writer**

> *Children who know more than one language are significantly better at thinking about problems from more than one perspective, compared with children who are monolingual.*
>
> —**Naomi Baron, professor and author of *Growing Up with Language: How Children Learn to Talk***

In their recently published report, *Language Characteristics and Schooling in the United States, A Changing Picture: 1979-1989*, the National Center for Education Statistics claimed "given the large numbers of new migrants from non-English speaking countries whose first language is other than English, there may have been more limited English persons in the United States than at any other time in recent history." The NCES findings at least serve to validate the importance of multilingualism to education since conservative estimates fix the number of LEP students in the U.S. at five and a half million.

In Part 1 of this Border Issues in Education series, we referenced two-way developmental bilingual education as one method for all LEP students in the U.S.—both native born and immigrant—to reach their full potentials. As a preferred standard of bilingual delivery, two-way bilingualism is proving itself in demonstration schools and classrooms across the country. A study released in March by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) found that K-4 students demonstrated academic achievement gains no matter how much native language instruction they received. But by the 12th grade, the achievement difference between students who had been educated in two-way bilingual classes and those in "pullout" programs where students beyond the 6th grade are offered little or no instruction in their native language was remarkably wide. Study author Virginia Collier of George Mason University in Virginia found that upper-grade students who had received no instruction in their native languages performed worst as the English curriculum became more "cognitively complex."

Some educators may remember that when the term "bilingual education" was used in the 1950s in the U.S., the Cold War called for students to advance quickly not only in math and science so that the U.S. could keep up with the then Soviet Union, but also in second language learning. As Mary Cazabon, Wallace Lambert, and Geoff Hall remind us in their 1993 report *Two-Way Bilingual Education: A Progress Report on the Amigos Program*.. The bane of being "ugly" Americans in many parts of the world made bilingual education for "mainstream Anglophone Americans" seem logical as a way to improve international perceptions of American tolerance of foreign languages and cultures. Building on research that showed the more languages students studied, the better their math skills on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, two-way bilingualism, the authors maintain, is the most innovative strategy yet tried because it seeks to reconcile that previous focus of mainstream expansionism through language and the prevailing belief and practice that bilingual education exists to assist LEP students.

Further, the researchers discovered that even though half the instruction for all classes was provided in English and half in Spanish with the suppositions that the two groups of students—one dominant English, one dominant Spanish—would learn from and with each other, the native English students suffered no loss in achievement. Socially, the students' choice of friends was free of ethnocentricity, in part because they were chipping away at the language barrier, at cultural isolation, and at monocultural centrism as they mastered the two languages. Most importantly, "both sets of students are acquiring a solid academic foundation and the basic elements necessary to become functionally bilingual."

A different 1988 study of fully English proficient students who attended bilingual education programs over a six-year period found no evidence—for or against—the development of bilingualism and academic achievement. But University of Arizona researcher Fe Carol Pittman, did find that as they learned to speak and communicate in Spanish, attitudes toward Mexican culture and Mexican Americans grew more positive among students and their parents.

From a research standpoint then, two-way bilingualism validates the supposition that if a child learns two languages from birth that child recognizes instantly that a word is little more than an arbitrary label attached within a changing, but explicable world of meaning, operation, and usage. More specifically, two-way bilingual educational programs like the Amigos collaborative effort in Cambridge, Massachusetts, hoped to take the best features of transitional bilingual education, designed for LEP students, and language immersion education, designed for native English speakers.

The impetus for the Amigos collaborative language acquisition model evolved as much from the change in the definition of bilingual education over the last 40 years as from any single factor. James Crawford, in his text *Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice*, chronologizes the maturation of bilingual education from expert preference to political and civil right. In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act, mainly as an umbrella for the provision of funds to help educate students who did not speak English. By 1970, Kinney Lau and 1,789 other Chinese students in San Francisco had sued the school district. They realized they were failing school because they did not understand English, the language of instruction. In 1974, the Supreme Court agreed with them, writing: "students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." Crawford is quick to point out that neither the Supreme Court nor the suit favored bilingual education per se, but the Carter Administration believed some form of instruction in the native language while the students learned to master English would decrease the disparity and the inequity in educational opportunity for students who neither spoke nor understood English upon entering U.S. schools. The Carter Administration therefore encouraged the adoption of bilingual education instead of the early-exit "sheltered English" special help many teachers preferred. Key to the origin of the bilingual perspective was its effectiveness toward two important ends: 1) to educate a group of minority students who were then the nation's largest dropout population; and 2) to further preserve the language and therefore the pride in culture and self that are encoded within the language. As José Armas articulates it: "It had been our hope that the creation of bilingual education programs would have resulted in the education of children with true bilingual/bicultural skills. It made perfect sense that kids in the Southwest have two languages and cultures. . . . Parents as well as educators are now saying that bilingual education should not be a remedial program, but an enrichment program to create bilingual children."

Critics of bilingual education like Rosalie Pedalino Porter, a former bilingual education teacher and author of 1990 hot-seller *Forked Tongue: The Politics of Bilingual Education* were not deterred. Asserting that schools with large language minority populations should follow the lead of Asian parents who advocate for English immersion programs, Porter was adamant in her belief that bilingual education programs were programmed to fail. With statements that defied research on language acquisition and learning, Porter ignored the work of Jim Cummins and others who have demonstrated time and again that academic knowledge acquired in any language pools in the same part of the brain—much like water under the surface of two icebergs—and can then be used to develop either or both languages. For this basic reason and others, Porter's argument—however insistent—didn't hold water: "The most basic flaw," she asserted "is the idea that you can teach children in Spanish for four or five hours a day and as a result they learn English better." Her argument, however contrary to the research, sounded commonsensical to those who had not and did not care to base their beliefs on research. In short, like those who maintain that immigration is inherently harmful rather than helpful, Porter spoke to people's fears in the U.S., and they listened. They believed her claims that bilingual education was responsible for the dropout rate, that it was created and perpetuated solely by teachers interested in spouting ethnic politics and new jobs. In 1991, MOME (Mothers of Multicultural English), an organization of immigrant mothers, took to the streets and classrooms of New York City, all but begging officials to provide as much English-only instruction as soon as possible to their children.

Bilingual education advocates were soon handed new ammunition and fresh mounts with which to defend their position. A five-year, 2,000-student 1992 U.S. Department of Education study that showed well-implemented bilingual education programs in California, Texas, Florida, New York, and New Jersey did indeed ease a child's transition from the language of the home to an all-English classroom. Opponents countered, albeit more weakly, with requests for achievement scores of the study subjects.

Though arguably ideal in most if not all dual-language situations, expanding two-way bilingualism into middle and high schools has proven difficult, according to a number of the nation's most progressive and innovative bilingual educators. They blame the scarcity of bilingual teachers, bilingual texts, and the traditional use of class periods per se as significant deterrents. Of the 171 schools in 100 school districts that use a two-way bilingual model, only two were located in high schools last year.

Standing in stark contrast to bilingual education as developed and practiced in the U.S., all-English immersion strategies are still preferred and used in the most expensive private schools in Mexico. The practice is frowned upon in the U.S., given research that maintains immersing students with little or no English proficiency in all-English classrooms is not only a prescription for short-term failure, but is damaging to students over their entire educational careers as well.

Laredo's reality may well be the language reality of the border region

Cultures are produced by a clash of cultures—even as Mexico is a mixture of Spanish and Indian—and he (Carlos Fuentes) sees the United States heading for such a clash: "The opposites do not annul each other but rather tend to fuse each other."

—Carlos Fuentes in Anthony Day's "The Transpolitan Novelist"

It's a perception problem. The standard premise that basic communicative English must precede academic English is prejudicial.

—Carolyn Bernache, low-literacy coordinator, quoted in *New Voices*, National Center for Immigrant Students

NEW MEXICO
UNITED STATES
TEXAS

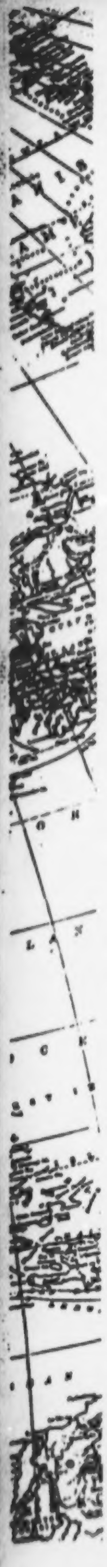
> *In the end, the way language is taught in this country will reflect where the country is going, its very identity.*
>
> **—from Richard Bernstein's "In U.S. Schools A War of Words" *New York Times Magazine*, October 14, 1990**

The fears of immigrant parents who worry that learning in two languages will impede their children's acquisition of English are fueled by the tendency of young children to blend words from two languages into a single sentence when they are very young. And, for years immigrant parents have reported their children's reluctance to speak their native language outside the home—unless they live in a community where the native language is commonly spoken. In that exception—a community with second language dominance (like Laredo, Texas, and its environs)—lies the reality of border language learning and usage in border schools. Spanish is the dominant language in all sectors of Laredo society save the school, and given the recent immigrant backlash of our recessionary time, there's an understandable reluctance by native-Spanish speaking students to learn and use English on the U.S. side of the border. Besides, contend educators at United ISD's Juarez-Lincoln Elementary in El Cenizo, "so much of our business community caters to Mexican nationals. . . the Spanish language is necessary because it's a source of revenue and a source of commerce. . . . We have kids who decode from Spanish to English, but they don't necessarily comprehend what the decoding is," explains the school's assistant principal.

"And, there are no role models, no businesses that speak the English," offers the school's principal Juanita Zepeda. "So the only English that students routinely hear is in the school. And even here, in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in the halls, everything is *como estás.*"

Although the educators realize there's more English spoken in the more affluent Laredo neighborhoods, they still insist Spanish dominance is perceived as more useful by the children and the community. Unless students see the border region as a stopping point on the road to the rest of the global village, there's little incentive to learn or invest in English as some affluent Mexican nationals have chosen to do.

One option to change Laredo's provincial perspective to a more bilingual, and thus broader mindset, may lie in diminishing the dualistic, either-or approach to language learning that dominates discussions of bilingual education in the U.S. The deficit philosophy rages between language minorities and English speakers and between mestizos and indigenous people in Mexico. If you've ever wondered why LEP minority students continue to be over-represented in special education and remedial classes; or why the states with the largest number of students whose home language is not English like Texas, and California, and Florida have the largest number of students with speech and language "impairments," the answer some civil rights activists ascribe to is simple: *The power of the dominant language in a monolingually ruled society is absolute.* In short, the deeper structure (to borrow a phrase from Noam Chomsky without his meaning), may, in this case, lie in the



larger society. And, most importantly, that same society has the means to stem the flow of misplaced, misunderstood, thrown away children, predestined to drop out of school and sometimes life.

"In this country, we make the learning of language unnatural and hurried," explains Ramon Alaniz, in logic that dovetails with that of IDRA's José Cárdenas. "We somehow place English as the most important language. That creates a negative attitude that develops early toward English among non-native English speakers, and it's difficult to break that as they move from the younger years to maturity."

Studies show that when adults are placed in a situation where half the population is monolingual, the adults break down in frustration, but children won't. They're able to take more. But if kids don't see any need for English, especially if they don't feel good about it, they won't use it when they're not forced to. That's why unbiased, bilingual education in an unbiased language learning environment is the more natural approach.

"The system is set up in such a way that if a youngster isn't able to pass a standard test in the second language in one to three years," observes Alaniz, "they're seen as failures, the validity of the bilingual education program is questioned, and the schools are penalized. No wonder the official U.S. bias for English and against Spanish persists."

In various cases since 1981, the state of Texas spent millions in the courts to hinder bilingual education. Through appeals, bilingual education opportunities in Texas and some other states have been extended to the sixth grade. But at what monetary cost to the State? And more importantly at what cost to the vision of a non-competitive bilingual environment that does not see one language as superior, more necessary, or just plain better than the other?

Further, on the border among children whose families have migrated from the rural interior of Mexico, and are poor, students don't have the real experience base in either language to initially do well in school. That's why it makes sense for teachers to feel free to focus on whatever language the child brings to school—even if that is the language of no school experience. From there, in a classroom, school, and community environment that respects all manner of communication, teacher and child can develop skills that are needed, and those are transferable to the next language. Since the two most used languages in the U.S. and Mexico are Spanish and English, rather than limited English proficiency ratings (that imply deficiency rather than growth and possibility in language acquisition), perhaps some form of English/Spanish proficiency measure could provide a more even-handed assessment tool. The gist? Take out the superior-inferior language competition, and let language acquisition happen naturally *en la frontera* and in less linguistically dynamic regions as well.

Bilingual educators eager to extend the research gains noted by two-way bilingual programs agree in practice with Alaniz. They've noted that when English-dominant students who are learning Spanish in a two-way program feel discriminated against by their "English-only" peers, the English-dominant students tend to stop speaking Spanish outside the classroom. Spanish-dominant students, on the other hand, speak only Spanish in such negatively charged environments, "to be defiant" as one bilingual coordinator put it. Such anti-English sentiment undermines the effectiveness of isolated programs, but must be addressed, say bilingual educators, if any practice is to prove successful.

Evolving from limited English Proficiency (LEP) to English/Spanish Proficiency (ESP): The first steps

> *I am luckier than Anglos. I speak two languages.*
>
> —excerpted from a first-grade bilingual writing assignment,
> San Antonio, Texas, 1992.

> *"¿Quieres chicle?" the lady asks in Spanish too big for her mouth.*
> *"Gracias." The lady gives him a whole handful of gum for free, little cellophane cubes of Chiclets, cinnamon and aqua and the white ones that don't taste like anything but are good for pretend buck teeth.*
> *"Por favor," says the lady. "¿Un foto?" positioning her camera.*
> *"Sí."*
> *"Hey, Michele, Keeks. You guys want gum?"*
> *"But you speak English!"*
> *"Yeah," my brother says, "we're Mericans."*
> *We're Mericans, we're Mericans.*
>
> —from Sandra Cisneros' short story *Mericans*

In the case for bilingual education, the trinational free-market economy may provide the best postscript for our discussion here and, simultaneously, the best preface to the future. The third most widely spoken native language in the U.S. is French—Canada's second most populous tongue. Spanish is the second most frequently used language in U.S. business, courts, journalism, and legal and commercial translation. Already, bi- and trilingual businesspeople command higher salaries and are the most sought-after professionals on the continent. Thus, the calls for Spanish language maintenance and advanced Spanish literacy training in addition to English proficiency are in demand. For the first time since the 1970s saw an influx of Hispanic Americans into colleges and universities in increased numbers, special Spanish courses for native-speakers are on the rise. Interest back then waned, Spanish professors say, because the universities did not support the courses, and because too little research was conducted on how to best teach Spanish to native speakers. With the renewed interest, the National Endowment for the Humanities recently stepped in with a grant to New Mexico State University, that for the first time funded the training of educators to teach Spanish to native speakers. The courses typically focus on the areas of articulation most native speakers don't or can't get at home—studies in grammar, spelling, and punctuation typically taught through the literature of noted intellectuals Carlos Fuentes and Tomás Rivera. But, like José Cárdenas, most of the new Spanish-for-native-speakers experts are less interested in replacing or correcting students' colloquial Spanish with that of the Royal Academy. They're focusing instead on when to use the formal form and when to use the vernacular. And, most realize they must soon address the need for a variety of ability levels to accommodate people from Mexico who may be highly literate in Spanish.

But even the creation of a border zone or *frontera* to act as a large demonstration site for Spanish/English two-way bilingualism would likely not solve the language clash that's inevitable between a nation that is so overwhelmingly monolingual in policy. Clearly more open attitudes like that espoused by Alaniz are closer to a long-term evolution-as-solution to English/Spanish proficiency needs on the border. Barring sensitivity training and an established day during which everyone's mind would change, new approaches to the barriers of Babel ought to be explored.

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The Border's most urgent collaboration: Providing comprehensive social services to children and families in la frontera

These are the arguments: Mexican workers are the principal cause of the state deficit. They get social benefits in excess, do not contribute to the state economy, and overburden it with educational and health expenses. They are the reason for unemployment . . . and last, but not least, they introduce drugs into the state.

But these are lies.

—Carlos Fuentes, *Illegal Immigrants Are Not Enemies*

Contrary to research findings, people still believe immigrants take more than they give back in the way of state financed and supported health care, welfare, and education. With NAFTA we'll have more people from all the continent working legally. Perhaps the perceived investment and the cost of social services will not be as high.

—Texas A&M International's Ramon Alaniz

We have not for a moment lost sight of the ultimate purpose of our actions and efforts: improvement of the quality of life for our fellow countrymen and especially for those among us who live in the intolerable state of extreme poverty and destitution. . . . Sensitive to the intensity of demands and needs, we will face the challenge of providing drinking water and social services to both rural and urban Mexico.

—Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of Mexico, in his presentation of *The Mexico We Want by 1994: 1989-1994 National Development Plan*

How good it is to be here. . . . I want to be president of Mexico so that I can be close to the whole population. . . . I know what it is to live the life of all of you in the factory.

—from last speech of Luis Donaldo Colosio, presidential candidate assassinated on the campaign trail, March 23, 1994

In their 1990 study, *Measuring Tijuana Residents Choice of Mexican or U.S. Services*, Sylvia Guendelman, a social worker, and Monica Jasis, a physician, sampled 660 households and 2,954 individuals to validate what many social service providers had already deduced: *Mexican immigrants are not a drain on the U.S. public health system.* Specifically, the researchers found that 40.3 percent of the Tijuana residents used health services exclusively in Mexico, as compared with 2.5 percent who used services in the U.S. Of that tiny percentage of U.S. health care consumers, the greatest number were older Mexicans, U.S. citizens residing in Mexico, and middle class professionals. Further, 84 percent of the U.S. care visits were to private providers who were directly paid for services by the Mexican residents.

At least since the Conference on *Health Problems of the U.S. Mexico Border: Gaps in Service and How to Fill Them*, held in El Paso, Texas in the spring of 1985, there's been talk of collaborating "nation-to-nation," "state-to-state," "county-to-municipio," and "project-to-project" on social service provision in and around the Border. While school-based clinics and systemic social service provision through the schools steadily gains favor in the U.S., they are still talked about more than they are offered. Mexico, on the other hand, has developed a socialist approach to health care provision through its Social Security system. Thus, health care debates in Mexico do not center on equity of coverage as much as on the tremendous need for health care, given Mexico's 50 percent poverty rate, and most recently, pollution levels along the border. Last September, for example, members of the U.S. Congress took the "Dead Chicken Tour" along the Rio Grande in response to a three-fold increase in brain and spine birth defects reported in border communities. Back in 1985, the Conference on Border Health Issues deemed pollution too "controversial" to be adequately examined without government funding, support, and assistance. Meanwhile, Hispanics in the U.S. stand a significantly higher chance of contracting life-threatening diseases than their Anglo counterparts, and too many Latino babies are dying or deformed when they're born on the Border.

Unfortunately, social service professionals in the U.S. have been slow to address the issues of Mexican immigrant socio-economic concerns. Health-needs assessments are few and far between, and few if any bilateral studies exist of health and social service provision through schools on the U.S./Mexican border. The omission is glaring considering the public hue and cry against immigrant use of social services. With a few notable exceptions like Eva Moya's collaborative work in the El Paso/Cuidad Juarez area, this lack of knowledge doesn't seem to stop educators, health professionals and social service providers from doling out elixirs and bandaids rather than investing the time and energy necessary to form the partnerships, collaborate, and if appropriate, build strong profamily systems that make the most of education and human services in the Border region and between the two countries—all of which was called for at the Border Health conference in El Paso back in 1985.

Although Margaret Sherraden and Stephen Wallace offer an even-handed presentation of Mexico's Solidaridad primary health care plan and U.S. Community Health Centers in the U.S., all too often, largely owing to its status as the smaller, poorer neighbor to the South, Mexico has taken a health and social service provision "rap" that was neither effective nor based on informed diagnosis. In their study, *Factors Influencing the Development of Area Health Education Centers with Texas-Mexico Border Populations*, Virginia Fowkes and her colleagues identified barriers to the development of such comprehensive health education/service programs: 1) differing school and community priorities; 2) cultural differences between school faculty and the community; 3) physician and dentist fear of competition; and 4) health care delivery systems that were too sparse and few to support education in isolated and underserved areas.

No formal studies exist to validate the conviction in their claims, but social service collaborators like Eva Moya (who heads a community development project in El Paso under the auspices of the Kellogg Foundation) and reporters with the *Houston Chronicle* insist that in many tangible ways along the Border, "Mexico is ahead of the U.S. in providing universal medical care." Desarollo Integral de la Familia (DIF) or (Whole Development of the Family) is one of Mexico's strongest agencies committed to addressing the needs of children and the elderly—most recently in rural communities throughout Mexico. Last year the local DIF head in Nuevo Laredo began a breakfast and parent involvement/empowerment program for students and families who live in rural areas outside the city. The free breakfast program existed nationwide during the presidency of Lopez-Portillo. In Juarez, an organization called Vertebración is tapping its 140 health and social service collaborators for alternative ways to address the health issues of children and families.

(continued on page 20)

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El Cenizo's case for social service provision through the school

Don't drink the burnt water; there's no air there

> *Burnt water,* atl tlachinolli: *the paradox of creation is also the paradox of destruction.* **—from the Author's Note to *Burnt Water*, by Carlos Fuentes**

> *The real issue isn't bilingual ed. It's lingual ed. . . . More and more kids are entering school without the language skills to succeed in a traditional classroom. Not because they speak Spanish . . . at home, but because they don't speak anything at home.* **—Joanne Jacobs, *Children Lacking Language Skills Strain Schools, Lose Out Big Time***

> *Language isn't a problem. What I did find to be a problem was with the socialization level of the student. Along the border lifestyles are more dynamic than the interior regions of Mexico. The integration of the student into the class can be quite traumatic.* **—Teacher, Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico**

History says Mexico City was built by the Spaniards on a lake that had dried up after too many battles with the Aztecs. The Rio Grande is so polluted that at its shallowest it can easily remind onlookers of that history. From the vantage point of the school nurses and educators who live and work along the river, the polluted water that is undrinkable even after it evaporates, is recycled through the clouds, falls back to the earth as rain, and is caught in the school's water tank, is but another challenge with which they must contend. In fact, the first thing Elsa Arce, At-Risk Coordinator for United South ISD tells me as we drive into the parking lot of Juarez-Lincoln Elementary School is, "Don't drink the water." Staring at the water tank perched above the school's slightly pitched roof, I ask why. "It's supposed to be safe, but it can still make you sick. Drink a coke," she advises me with a smile.

Once inside the school, it doesn't take long to learn that polluted water is the least of the hardships here. Survival is this community's smallest and sometimes only dream. Juarez-Lincoln serves the 2,000 souls in the El Cenizo City colonia, an hour's drive south of Laredo. The school is less than a year old, and the wall at the city's entrance is like any you'd see in an suburban Dallas or Houston subdevelopment. Only there's no model home and the clapboard structures —half a room on this side of the dirt road, an abandoned Winnebago in which a family resides across the same street—belie the promise of prosperity heralded by such a substantial brick entrance. Even the name, El Cenizo, taken from the beautiful purple sage that grows wild and from which the local *abuelitas* sometimes make tea, seems a cruelly ironic choice. Residents of El Cenizo bought their lots of land for a relative pittance—sometimes as little as $100 down—but many were tricked into buying plots that had already been bought several times over. The owner of the land is being sued for that and for not supplying the residents with water, or electricity, or sewers, or garbage disposal, or fire protection, or health services. But the people—some of whom are immigrants, others who are simply poor—must nonetheless call the ramshackle housing home for now. An El Cenizo resident and Juarez-Lincoln teacher explains most of the colonia citizens are carpenters, and some work at McDonald's or Jack in the Box. Meanwhile their structures stand against the heat and the dry wind as a testament to their building skill and the tenacity it takes to make something of less than nothing.

Put simply, the school is El Cenizo's only public service, and the teachers know that. Ms. Gutierrez, the school's full-time nurse is one of the first to speak: "On a daily basis, I see 80 to 90 students a week. On Mondays it's worst. What happens during the weekend, I get to see it Monday morning, because most of the students I see don't have access to Medicare or Medicaid—"

I interrupt: "What do you mean? What happens to them on weekends?"

"If the kids get in an accident during the weekend on the unpaved streets, or catch a virus at home, the parents tell them to wait until Monday when they can see the school nurse. They don't have access to transportation to get to Laredo to the clinic, so we're their clinic."

"She's the doctor," the principal adds.

"Do you refer students to a lot of other sources?" I ask, unable to keep the ramifications of no health care from seeping to the front of my mind.

"I refer them a lot to the health department, but many times that's very limited since they don't have Social Security, they don't have papers, and those are two of the requirements in order for them to be seen. So it comes back to us to see them," the nurse patiently explains.

Almost instantly, Principal Juanita Zepeda injects hope. HUD, and Texas A&M International plan to help by building a new community center for El Cenizo City. With it will come the WIC program, Food Stamps, a clinic, and an adult and Spanish literacy program. "We project that by the end of the summer, the Center will be ready to go," says Rey Pottin, El Cenizo resident, alternative certification student at Texas A&M, and full-time teacher.

"Good morning," calls the Bilingual Coordinator Lettie Solis as she unleashes a litany of statistics that make the most seasoned school administrators stop and listen: "Here at our campus we have a total of 736 students as of yesterday. Of those, 647 are LEP, 89 are non-LEP. 626 are on free lunch, one student reduced lunch, and 9 full price. We have 148 recent immigrants here at Juarez-Lincoln—recent meaning from zero months to two years here. The majority of the children that we're picking up from Mexico, what kind of schooling do they have? None."

They don't know what a pencil is, that this a book, that you don't tear books, the teachers tell us. They've talked about taking the children on field trips to see washers and dryers at WalMart or Montgomery Ward. "We read about pillowcases, and escalators, and elevators," an elementary teacher explains and there's no way you can show these children a picture of these things and expect them to know what you're talking about. You have to take them to experience these things, first-hand." The teachers are mostly young, idealistic, from San Antonio and Laredo proper. They want to help, but they are sickened by the poverty. They want to show us; they get visitors so seldom. We pile into cars during their lunch hour and drive the neighborhoods of El Cenizo City, so they can show us what the children they teach must live with for a shot at the American Dream: "It's horrible," a teacher fresh out of undergrad tells me. "More than a dozen people living in a one-room shack, smells of urine, flies everywhere. It's pathetic. I went to donate a Christmas tree, and when I got there, I had to leave it outside, it would have taken up the whole space of the house, and they have twelve children who have to sleep there. So we planted the tree. It's very frustrating. They come to us with all this anger, all this anger."

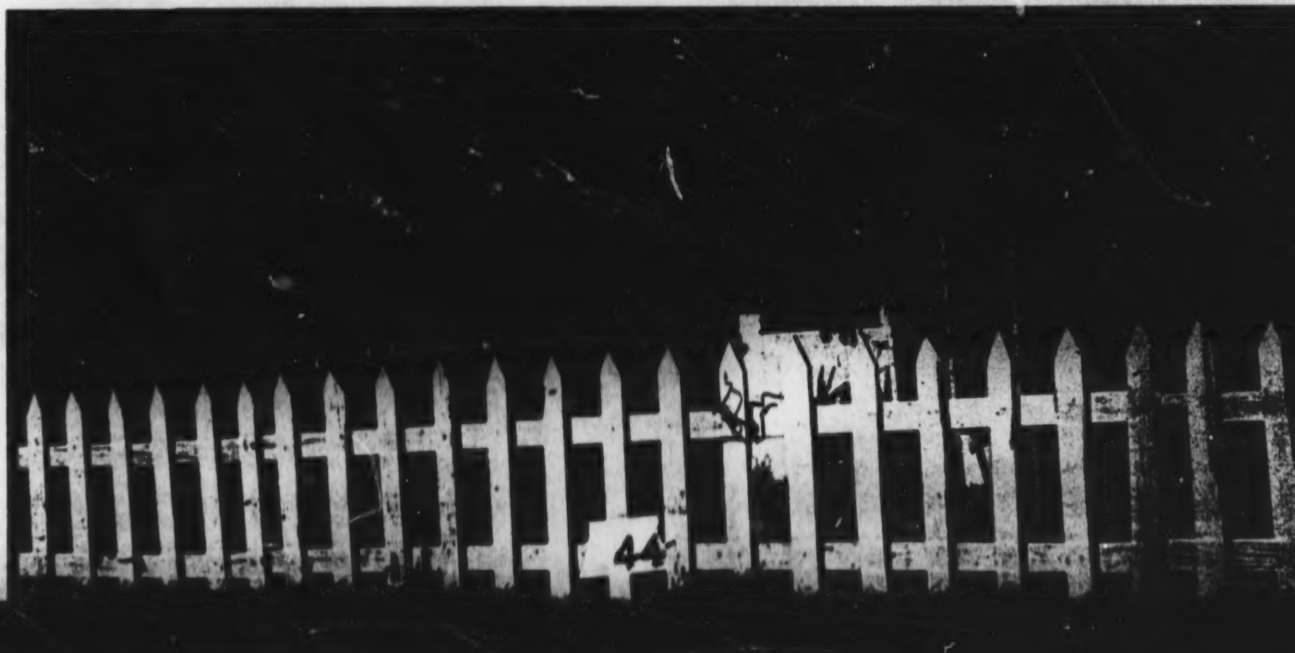
"And where does the anger go?" I ask looking out the window, unable to escape the scenes in my head or those just beyond the car's window.

"Towards each other," the teachers answer in unison. "Today I went into my classroom and all the sixth graders were crying," the youngest one continues. I asked, 'What's the matter?' They told me last night three of the girls were outside walking around, and one of the girl's sisters calls her inside the house. The older sister beats the younger with her fists, knocks her across the room several times, hits her head twice, and the little girl faints. So she's in the hospital right now. The doctor says her heart is too weak, and she might die, so all the sixth graders are mourning. It's very difficult to teach social studies when something like this happens more often than you can imagine."

To gain the community's trust, Zepeda and her staff donned their sneakers and walked door-to-door in the colonia, trying to get the parents to trust them and their school. Since many of the students are from central Mexican states and may not have even stopped in Nuevo Laredo across the river before entering the U.S., they have been preyed upon by greedy guides and/or immigration foes who see them as the reason for the recession and lost jobs, and they are fearful. Others journey on, beyond *la frontera* and into big cities like Houston and Dallas, only to find themselves mired in inner city crime. So they come back to the border, buy their piece-of-a-piece of property, build a fence with scraps from dumps and trucker crates, and try to find work.

This summer Principal Zepeda plans to reallocate $2,000 from funds designed for competitions against more affluent students "in the north." She'll use the dollars for after-school tutorials, super Saturdays, and parent hygiene and parenting classes that may make a difference for the children who hate for their teachers to take them home, who volunteer to stay at the school . . . "always."

But El Cenizo isn't the only colonia in United South District. (Three other schools were built a year ago to accommodate the burgeoning growth along this slice of the Border.) Nor is this colonia necessarily destined to remain impoverished. As we travel back to the manicured lawns of Laredo's "C" Section all laden with domesticated purple sage, trimmed into powder green hedges that upstage the concrete foundations of sturdy homes, an El Cenizo teacher points to another community. "This community used to be the colonia that was farthest out. Now it's closer in, its residents have found jobs, they've been able to build better housing, it's not as poor." Maybe the same will happen to El Cenizo. Maybe it will bloom, become a domesticated part of the South Texas border landscape with drinkable water that sustains—rather than water burnt by the harsh sun, chemicals, and border poverty.



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Still, with one in three people on the planet unable to find employment or to earn decent wages, according to a recent United Nations study, the number of people who need and seek out medical care and services to survive cannot help but strain the system beyond its originally intended capacity. But not all of those in need are immigrants. In their treatise, *Toward Integrated Family Services in Rural Settings: A Summary of Research and Practice*, Jack Stoops and Janis Hull of the Northwest Regional Laboratory identify three elements that are essential to successful integration of social services in rural areas of the U.S.: a person to lead the coordination effort, a central facility to house the services, and a governance structure to facilitate the efforts. According to Moya the first essential in Mexico is always the coordinator. "It's a priority of the Ministry of Education in Mexico to place social services within the school services," reports Moya, adding that some monies have also been allocated. "They perceive the social service worker as a key person in the development of children and families. Sometimes it's a counselor or an academic advisor that ends up doing social work within the school system. So you have one person taking many responsibilities."

Again, the best way to gauge met and unmet needs may be to go to the source. Teachers sampled in Nuevo Laredo maintain that a relationship exists between medical services and schools that is different from that generally practiced in the U.S. In high school and college, students are provided free medical services by law, just as free vaccinations for all children—while only recently mandated in the U.S.—have been provided through Mexican schools for years. "Students, whether in primaria, secundaria, preparatoria or universidad, have medical coverage for emergencies which include free operation within the social security system," explained the Nuevo Leon educators. "Some larger institutions in the secundaria have a doctor or nurses to attend to the needs of the students. They are part of the school and not of social services. They have obligations similar to those of teachers."

Toward inclusion and access: Special Education in Mexico and en la Frontera

Decentralization of Mexican educational initiatives may well be one of the prime reasons for the creation of a disability rights platform in Mexican schools. According to Cieloha Danford's 1986 study, *Special Education in the Context of National Development: The Case of Mexico*, in 1982 the Dirección General de Educación Especial (DGEE) reported serving 112,026 students with disabilities nationwide, the majority with language and speech problems. But the DGEE also reported the number of students in need of special education services for that year at 3,469,132. Thus, though special education services and credentialing in many of Mexico's major metropolitan areas differ primarily in availability from that of the U.S., students with disabilities in Mexico are still typically isolated, or excluded from the nation's public schools.

Like all developed nations, special education in Mexico evolved through the founding of national schools in the 19th century for students with deafness, blindness, and/or mental retardation to more recent offices and efforts in all 31 Mexican states. "Parents of children with disabilities traditionally either paid for them to attend private schools, or simply kept the children at home," explains Mexican national and Educational Consultant Margarita Ramos. For our observations here, the dearth of research and information on the most effective and viable ways of meeting the educational needs of border students with disabilities is particularly limiting and severe. As SEDL's Special Education and Rehabilitation Services Center Director John Westbrook explains, "Very little research exists to show the true impact of the level of immigration in school districts along the border. The sheer numbers of people coming to the U.S. from Mexico who first live in poverty, make the federal regulations and guarantees under the (U.S.) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) difficult to check and enforce. We need to study the issue along with innovative special strategies to see what might work. Until we accurately assess the need and have data in hand, it's unproductive to talk about newcomer schools as a solution. To think that we can precisely determine a special education category with so little real data is presumptuous."

Despite the limited resources and the drawbacks peculiar to border cross-migration, some special educators and special students in Mexico are more optimistic today than they have been in years. Thanks to the recent advocacy of a number of civic activists in the state of Nuevo Leon, and the new national reform-climate, students with disabilities are slowly but surely making their way into the mainstream of Mexican education.

"What's happening now has three dimensions," reports Ramos. "First the state of Nuevo Leon passed legislation called the "Integration Law" specifically protecting the rights of people with disabilities for the first time in the state and the nation's history. Nuevo Leon effectively amended Mexican Constitutional Amendment 123, and some rural, federal schools have already begun to implement the law," reports Ramos. Although the state of Nuevo Leon has opted for "Integration" of people with disabilities into the mainstream rather than the "full inclusion" notion most often advocated by special educators in the U.S., Ramos believes both can serve the same ends.

Ramos and a consortium of special educators from The University of Texas are now designing a plan to certify teachers as special educators who will be able to implement the Nuevo Leon law. "They'll be certified in five areas," Ramos continues. "*Generic* (that is, learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional disturbances); *multiple/developmental disabilities*; *early childhood*; *vocational rehabilitation*; and *special education administration*." But as has been the case and the limitation of many bilateral teacher training/exchange initiatives to date, students will only be able to apply the certification credits to a credential at the University of Monterrey in Nuevo Leon—not The University of Texas at Austin or any other U.S.-side university. "We're trying to design the curriculum with the teachers at the state-level in mind," reports Ramos, particularly for those who are working toward a degree in Normal Especialisation. That means the first certificated graduates of the University of Monterrey's Special Educators programs should begin teaching in Mexico's schools as early as 1997.

The third current dimension of Special Education reform in Mexico is primarily symbolic, but no less potent in the message it sends. From April 28-30 of 1994, the 5th International Congress of Special Education will convene in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, to announce the strides made by policymakers and grassroots activists for people with disabilities. Coincidentally known as Common Cause (no relation to the U.S. organization), the strongest group of activists in Mexico—just as in the U.S.—are the politicized parents of children with disabilities who have labored long in Nuevo Leon to pass the Integration Law. "When we first met with the families of people with disabilities who are the backbone of

Common Cause," recalls Ramos, "we asked them what the ideal form of education would be for their loved ones. They described a society in which people opened the door to people with disabilities to the least restrictive environment imaginable. We breathed a sigh of relief because that was the consortium's ideal as well. The main contradictory point is being able to see individual differences as strengths in the mainstream."

The lesson of flowing glass: What we still don't know; what SEDL will do now

We think of dreams as intensely private, (but) . . . in Mayan villages dreams have a social and civic function.

—from Suzanne Ruta's, "Writers and Rebels: In Southern Mexico, They Are Much the Same," *The New York Times*

"What we imagine is both possible and real."

—Carlos Fuentes quoted in Anthony Day's profile for the *Los Angeles Times*

Put a pane of glass in a frame in 1994 and by 2094, the top of that glass will be thinner than its base. Glass flows; it never truly solidifies, and that metaphoric extension illustrates the learning process of living with and working through possibilities and problems whether they persist on the borderlands or in the heartlands. What we don't know after a hundred, years, two hundred years, a millennium becomes broader rather than less so. And like the child in the mirror, what we don't know or understand compels us to take a closer look. As Fuentes so eloquently reminds us, no one can stand in the shoes of another, but the border can either be a glass wall against which we bump our heads or a flowing, thickening, respected manifestation of our diversity.

In light of that distinction, SEDL will for the next several months convene a series of gatherings of representative educators from Mexico and the U.S. with the hope of filling gaps in understanding between the two country's educational systems and cultures. In contrast with official "Border" meetings of the past, SEDL's method and ends will go beyond what has heretofore been attempted. Specifically, between March 1, 1994, and November 30, 1995, SEDL's Center for Language Minority Populations Projects (CLMPP) will work to "develop a shared understanding" and to craft a binational vision of what education should be in order to serve the frontera region. Through a series of five small, mind-broadening meetings in the U.S. and Mexico, with cadres of U.S. and Mexican state education agency officials, school administrators and practitioners, universities, business and civic leaders, health and human service providers, immigration officials, federal government officials, and church leaders, SEDL hopes to clarify and build a "shared vision for the education and well-being of children, youth, and their families." The final step in the visioning process will be to "advocate, facilitate, and participate in the development of comprehensive, binational plans for realization of the vision."

"We know a lot more about Canada than Mexico, even though growth is coming from the South where we have yet to look with our eye to educational R&D," remarks SEDL President and CEO Preston Kronkosky. "We really have, I think, the opportunity to do something that's never been done before. It's exciting because we're breaking ground. This part of the country needs this, they've said they need it, and it's time to get to work."

Although the addition of the Border Colloquy to SEDL's multitask scope of work comes with no new funds from the federal government, SEDL did receive permission to redirect already funded dollars that were saved due to a reduction in the organization's indirect cost rate. Thus, as approved by the SEDL Board of Directors, the border issues in education initiative to promote binational understanding and planning will take no money away from existing SEDL programs.

"By the year 2010, which is the last year for implementation of NAFTA, it's our intention for SEDL to have served as an able facilitator in making the shared vision into reality along the 1,500 miles of the Border that Texas and New Mexico share with the Republic of Mexico," says SEDL Vice President and CLMPP Director Betty Mace-Matluck. "We have taken these steps because we saw many groups working rightfully and diligently on immediate problems and stop-gap measures. But years of research in this country and others have taught us that no progress can really be made unless there's a shared vision to guide the effort."

"Where our two nations come together, there's really a third nation that draws from the best of the two," concludes Kronkosky. "Maybe this zone of biculturalism and bilingualism can serve as a beacon to each of our nations."

Meanwhile . . . a postscript to immigration phobes and foes: The second Miranda warning

On June 12, 1992 Michael Elmer, a U.S. Border Patrol agent shot and killed Dario Miranda, an undocumented Mexican worker. . . . Using an unauthorized weapon, Elmer lodged two bullets in Miranda's back. Then he tried to hide the corpse. Elmer was pardoned by a state jury. . . . In federal court . . . once again, Elmer was exonerated.

—Introduction to Carlos Fuentes' *Illegal Immigrants Are Not Enemies*

(Tita) couldn't continue her reflections because the chickens were starting to make a huge ruckus. . . . It seemed they'd gone mad . . . giving each other little pecks at each other, trying to snatch away the last chunks of tortilla left on the ground. . . . They hopped and flew widely in every direction, launching violent attacks. . . . Soon the chickens were inescapably trapped by the force they themselves were generating in their mad chase; they couldn't break loose . . . until it changed into a mighty tornado destroying everything in its path. . . . the earth swallowed them up. After that fight only three chickens remained, plucked bald and one eyed.

—from Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*

Although the U.S. Congress defeated an amendment by a California Republican that would have cut off federal school aid to school districts who refuse to count students in their districts who are illegal immigrants, national immigrant-bashing and scapegoating continues:

—Texas politicians in the gubernatorial and senate races have seemed to fall all over themselves to make immigrants scapegoats for the state's fiscal woes. Using numbers whose validity was doubted in print by the Legal Director of the Texas Civil Rights Project, James C. Harrington (and verbally by others), the Governor's office claimed immigrants leave the state holding the bag for $166 million annually and threatened to sue the federal government to recoup the funds. Most of the candidates for state and national office are eager to appear tough on immigration, despite

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continued indicators, experiments, research, and the borne-out wisdom of experts who maintain that lines in the dirt, or harder-to-gauge currents, cannot impede the aspirations of people in search of a living. Thus far the candidates seem not only steeled against that wisdom, but deaf to its validation. In "tests" like the El Paso border blockade, illegal entry into El Paso decreased, while illegal entry in every other border city simultaneously increased to compensate need. The bottom line, to use an administration metaphor: *plug one leak in the sieve and the others, thus engorged, enlarge.*

—Meanwhile, "hunting Mexicans" fast becomes the favorite sport of teen bands and politicians seeking to get the bucks immigrants pass back from the federal government. Even seasoned academicians seem unable to come up with realistic innovations to "neutralize" the situation. In his appeal in *Phi Delta Kappan* for Congress to repeal its 1990, 40-percent increase in legal immigration, for example, David Stewart, author of *Immigration and Education: The Crisis and the Opportunities* and most recently "Immigration Laws are Education Laws Too" concludes: "A reduced level of immigration would be desirable.... More aggressive (though humane) action to control the increasing inflow of illegal immigrants would also be appropriate." Such idealized prescriptions all but ignore the lessons already learned by Operation Hold the Line in El Paso in 1993, and even in 1986 when would-be illegal immigrants held on to their dream of work and opportunity for another year or so until the coast was cooler and the squabbling chickens had been consumed by their own fury and the gaping earth on which they fought and pecked at each other.

—Irrational leaps in logic even surround the long-accepted myth of the population explosion that supposedly centers on Latin America. It's easy to presume the hungry hoards are coming from the south or the east if you haven't stopped to notice that birth rates are on the decline everywhere—even in Latin America. Nearly every western nation has been at or near zero population growth for some years. And "Latin America, long considered the most rapidly growing part of the world," claim a chorus observers, including Robert Barnstone, "has seen birth rates decline by a third and they are still falling." The plain fact of this fairly new phenomenon of modern times in which more people die than are born, could be far from positive. Arguably, the U.S. economy would suffer more from no population growth than it does with the current population growth that is largely attributable to immigrants. If immigration could be, and ultimately were cut too drastically, argue a handful of U.S. economists, the resulting decline in our growth and market-driven system could lead to real labor shortages, declines in housing demand, and an even deeper recession.

In all fairness, mid-North America (a.k.a the U.S.) may be more resistant to the current expansion in the national economy than to their own personal "Silent Depression." Wallace Peters highlights this notion in his new book of the same name. Apparently 80 percent of the U.S. population suffers and has suffered from stagnant incomes since 1973. The wealthiest 40 percent of the nation's families still earn 68 percent of the nation's income, and it's the 60 percent majority that sees their access to the American dream slipping slowly—but surely—out of reach. From this less visible, personal market crash, some in the majority strike out in ways that Mexican teachers understandably fail to fathom.

Despite the foes, the fears, the myths, and the political use of misinformation on immigration, at least a few policymakers hold out hope for resolution through reform. The recently convened U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, set up by the Immigration Act of 1990 and chaired by former Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, is in the process of hearing evidence that it hopes will help them through the morass. "Either we come up with a consensus on this issue that is agreeable to the majority of the people, or we turn our backs and say it's unsolvable," Jordan said in a March tour of El Paso, Texas. "I don't have a history of turning my back."

Not to go back, they have told me no.
No one has to be returned.
No one.
No one has to pay to be more than the others
And this instant
will be a light between two windows,
a trip through the glass border.

—untitled poem from J. A. Soldevila's *La Frontera de Cristal* (The Glass Border)

Editor's note: We mined a wealth of information on Mexican Indian language teaching and learning, binational educational technology, and adult literacy that was cut from these pages due to space constraints. The sections will, however, appear in a separate, forthcoming publication of the complete **Border Issues in Education** report.

To receive a copy, write or call: Border Issues in Education, SEDL, 211 East 7th Street, Austin, TX 78701, 512/476-6861. **SEDL**

PRODUCT ACTION LINE

Ready for a surefire way to school improvement? Then remember green signals "go" and reach for the box of "change" tools being used by trainers in the Southwestern Region. Be like the professor at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, who reached for the "change toolbox" to teach not only future school administrators in his course, but also to build a network of change leaders and trainers. Or the three Region Service Center trainers in Texas who use the box to help them teach site-based management, shared decision-making, and Total Quality Management (TQM) to working educators. One administrator of the Arkansas Leadership Academy even introduced the toolbox to school teams of superintendents, teachers, and parents. And three Arkansas educators believe so strongly that the toolbox changed the way they think about school improvement that they want to spread the word by training as many educators in its use as they can.

Dozens of others were trained in the use of the box by SEDL's Leadership for Change Institute staff Shirley Hord, Vicki Boyd, Nancy Fuentes, Dolly Rodriguez, and Pat Guerra. The trainees found the Leadership for Change Institute and materials to be a toolbox targeted to professionals who train educational leaders in state departments of education, on school boards, in colleges and universities, and at local schools. Teachers, parents, and community activists may also learn the change process and how it can work for them. We know because they've told us so in action reports written after the Leadership for Change training institutes took place in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Now, box in hand, trainers routinely hone school improvement efforts with the help of a 12-part schemata designed from at least two decades of research on how facilitative leaders create a context for change, and then work systematically to make it happen. The leaders use the six strategies that research shows must be provided in order for the school to get its changes made. "Without time, energy, resources, and facilitation, nothing changes for the better in the classroom or the school," explains Shirley Hord, who helped develop the change toolbox as part of SEDL's Services for School Improvement effort. "Ninety percent of the time, principals motivate and move people to get things started, but people need ongoing, at-the-elbow assistance to be sure that the innovations they start can stand up to use over the long haul. That's why the big task of the green box is to build awareness that change leaders need to pay attention to the change process—how it looks and how it works."

LEADERSHIP MEANS CHANGE!
GREEN MEANS GO!

"I was pleased that two participants in the Oklahoma training took it on their own initiative to conduct some 20 hours of the Change Leadership training for university and school district personnel," adds SEDL's Nancy Fuentes. But the real action test of success, says SEDL's Vicki Boyd, lies in the response these newly equipped educators will get from the students they are committed to educate. "Change Leadership is part belief change and part behavior change," she maintains. "The trainers we work with in the Institute have to not only teach educational leaders how to use the tools effectively, but also how to get clear on what it is they want to do." And that's where the box of tools can provide essential direction along with the extra leverage of research-based knowledge. —·—·— SEDL

For a listing of Leadership for Change trainers in your state, contact Deborah Jolly, Vice President, Services for School Improvement, at SEDL, 512/476-6861.

Seeing beyond racism:

Derrick Bell's clarifying view

> *He who hates has to show his hate in appropriate actions and behaviors; in a sense, he has to become hate. That is why the Americans have substituted discrimination for lynching.*
>
> – Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1967

> *I've decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.*
>
> – Martin Luther King, Jr., 1968

> *Only equals can be friends.*
>
> – Traditional Ethiopian saying

Derrick Bell spent decades in the civil rights arena as a Justice Department lawyer; a staff attorney of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund who worked with the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; Deputy Director for Civil Rights at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; and Director of the Western Center for Law and Poverty at University of Southern California Law School in Los Angeles. He joined the Harvard Law School faculty in 1969, and became its first African American tenured member in 1971, after which he accepted the deanship of the University of Oregon Law School. He returned to Harvard in 1986, only to be dismissed in 1992 after taking a two-year leave of absence in protest of the school's failure to hire and tenure women of color on its faculty. He refused to return because they did not change. Since then, Bell has been a visiting professor at the New York University Law School. He also lectures across the nation, often sharing his perspective with television and radio audiences. His text, Race, Racism and American Law *has been continually used in Civil Rights law and undergraduate courses nationwide since its first publication in 1971. His newest book of allegories,* Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism, *published in the fall of 1992, preceded Cornel West's riveting text,* Race Matters. *Together, the works provide two of the most evocative references on race from the African American perspective to reach print in a decade or more. Bell began exploring the fruits of his life's work allegorically in 1987 with the publication of* And We Are Not Saved: The Illusive Quest for Racial Justice.

Now, forty years after the U.S. Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education *ruling ushered in desegregation as a remedy to racism, we met with Dr. Bell at the National Alliance of Black School Educators conference. There, he graciously agreed to share his years of insight on race and racism in American education with you.*

SEDLETTER: When and under what circumstances did you first realize that racism is permanent in American society?

Derrick Bell: I've worked in civil rights law for 36 years. The realization came very very slowly, but I finally recognized that racism provides a kind of quasi-property for many people who really don't have anything. Racism makes them feel good about themselves when they would otherwise have no basis to feel good about themselves. The cost is the continuing burdens on blacks and other minorities.

Another component that I don't deal with as much is the "mark of oppression." That is what it has meant to be subordinated on the basis of color. It causes an awful load of self-subordination and self-hate, and it's manifested worst in our young people in the inner cities who see themselves as worthless unless they have a gun in hand and can get power that way. But they are much more willing to "waste"—or I guess "smoke" is the current term—other people who look like themselves, which is like killing themselves, you see.

So that there are any number of ways and factors that lead to the conclusion that racism is permanent. I hope that I'm wrong, but there's plenty of evidence that I'm right.

SEDLETTER: But what happens? Do you feel that you've undergone a paradigm shift or change in perspective over the years? When I read your book, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*, I thought you were a man who had gone from feeling that he could look down in the well and do some things, to feeling that he is really someone in the well looking out.

Derrick Bell: There was not a road to Damascus conversion, there was no one major trauma. I think that the recognition of the true character of racism opens up opportunities rather than closing them off. Recognizing the truth is always enlightening and uplifting. Even if it's a dire truth. It's a revelatory thing rather than a deeply depressing one.

SEDLETTER: Have you heard from others who changed their lives, behaviors, or activities in accordance with your permanence-of-racism theory? You have spoken of a man who ran through the streets with glee upon reading your book, but beyond him . . .

Derrick Bell: I've heard from many people that it gives them a new perspective, a new outlook, that they're going to see their role, their obligation, and their opportunity differently than they had before. People say, "What you say is true; and why didn't anybody clarify this before?" I get plenty of comments of that character. In fact, most people feel reinvigorated rather than discouraged by this realization. What they have been fighting and been frustrated by does not have to frustrate them.

SEDLETTER: Tonight you'll talk about restructuring organizations for change presumably in light of racism's permanence. Do you intend to make recommendations or offer suggestions beyond reinvigoration to the black educators at this conference and in schools around the country?

Derrick Bell: I deal with people who work at this full time. I think my role is to set a tone, provide a different climate for their expertise and commitment so that they may come up with new methods of dealing with their job challenges. My work as I see it is to re-energize them as they deal with something that looks and is very difficult. That's what I want to do, rather than provide a list or menu.

SEDLETTER: I understand, I don't believe in prescriptions either. So is your agenda primarily an awareness-setting one?

Derrick Bell: I think in goodly part it is.

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SEDLETTER: Your next book discusses how those who want to move beyond racism as reconcilable evil can and should confront authority. Why that facet of the fight?

Derrick Bell: Because much of my life has been standing up in my own way to that which is the authority and challenging it in whatever way I can. So I wanted to look at my experiences—particularly those that got so much attention at Harvard, but also many other experiences that I've had—in the hope they would be enlightening to others and perhaps encouraging to a few. I hope it's a book that provides its own kind of revelation within a narrower range of individual protest.

SEDLETTER: May I play devil's advocate for just a moment?

Derrick Bell: Yes.

SEDLETTER: Have you come across any whites who say there's nothing wrong with racism and its tenets? Who approach you and say, "I'm glad you've finally realized racism is permanent. Now I can say it with your blessing because you've legitimized the way I feel?"

Derrick Bell: Most of my students are not minorities, and many of them go through a "see" change during the course of a semester. I sometimes wish I could have only minority students and a few whites who are really aware so that we could all start from that point, but I haven't been able to manage that. I had two white students at the end of the last civil rights seminar class stand up and say, "When we started the course, you (Dr. Bell) said that racism is permanent, and we thought you were crazy." Both went on to say now they believe racism to be obviously permanent. So they moved that far in the course of a class. I've also had whites come up to me on the street and say, "What you say makes sense; now what can I do?"

SEDLETTER: Yes, but have you met the others who say, "I'm not going to do anything because now I'm off the hook?"

Derrick Bell: I don't think there's a sense of "off the hook." I think that there's a revelation that they are as trapped and disadvantaged by racism as we are. Perhaps worse in some ways. You look at the figures on income, unemployment, wealth, what have you, whites aren't as disadvantaged as a group. But in terms of who they are, who they think they are, what they see as their role in life, I think that racism is a very expensive price for them to pay. I think some come to see that and start their own proselytizing. You have to deal with who you're dealing with. There's no formula for the majority either.

SEDLETTER: So many educators are frustrated by the elusiveness of improving education for African Americans and other oppressed minorities. They're frustrated too by the fact that they've tried too many strategies from desegregation, to promoting simple proximity of the races, to multiculturalism—all to little or no avail. Now the new tack is Afrocentrism which goes back to some aspects of community schools like the segregated black schools in the days when segregation was legal. I've heard seasoned administrators exclaim, wide-eyed, "I work in a desegregation center. I never dreamed I'd be saying and thinking that desegregation doesn't work." What can you offer to these people in light of your work with racism? What can you offer the woman who stood up and declared, "How dare you take the hope away from our children?"

Derrick Bell: That woman was referring to the hope that kids need to achieve the way that she had. It's a tough thing. All I can say is that I didn't and can't take their strength away, but the society does and has. I'm arguing that we shouldn't mask what the society has done.

As far as what I offer frustrated educators, I suspect that these people will continue doing their work, only with a new awareness, with a new outlook, a new perspective, a new way of approaching that which they do. Much can still be done but maybe it's representing students in struggles with the school system, or getting adequate facilities. It sounds like more segregation, but it's not.

SEDLETTER: Yesterday, Asa Hilliard said that he wants African schools back, and in the same breath, he noted that some inner city schools are as much as 99 percent African American. Couldn't this contradiction play into the hateful hands of people who want separation of the races because they are racist?

Derrick Bell: Anything plays into the hands of somebody. If you worry about that, you never do anything. One of the things that black people have to deal with is that everything they do can be twisted. Integration and freedom of opportunity were twisted so that they would serve to maintain white dominance. So now we have continuing discrimination in perfectly desegregated schools if you look at the numbers. Discrimination persists through tests and tracking and all the techniques that are contrived on the face to make education equitable. But the substance is the same: Black kids are still getting the short end of the stick, and maybe worse than when they were going to at least some segregated schools. So you have to recognize that and say, "Now what can I do?"

The fact is that we (as blacks) have the skill to outsmart white racists. If that were not the case, we would have been annihilated a long time ago. So the challenge is to do this same kind of thing with this new era. And it's not easy, but it's not impossible either. I think one of the potentials for education and history is telling the truth about how bad the oppression has been. People get upset about it, but the truth is the truth. We just have to keep moving; we can't throw our hands up because we'll be thrown off track again. So always the hope is that if you can get a number of black folks together to push in the same direction, you'll eventually get somewhere. One of the best ways that can happen is through the children because people are concerned about the children. But then again, particularly with parents who have multiple problems, they're dependent on public schools for the education of their children, and that's dangerous.

SEDLETTER: Why is it dangerous to depend on public schools?

Derrick Bell: Because it's a duty to be involved. Public schools are structured so that they expect parents to be there to act as a kind of monitor. It's something middle-class white parents have done and indeed insist on; it's an expectation black parents have to either change to better fit their struggle or learn to do better.

SEDLETTER: With all the controversy over the constitutionality of single-race and single-sex schools, it's easy to forget that desegregation often placed only a few black children in all-white schools. How do you feel about that phenomenon?

Derrick Bell: At one time I thought it was great. I never shall forget a young girl from Mobile, Alabama—Vertie Mae Davis. She was smart and bright, and she would come back and tell us how she got the white kids told. What we didn't think about was those black kids who were not as smart as Vertie Mae Davis. Who got easily disturbed, who couldn't

On the 40th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education . . .*

Four decades ago we hailed the court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* finding both that the significant number of racially segregated schools violated the equal protection clause and that those schools designated for black children harmed their hearts and minds in ways not likely to be undone. How could we who remember that historic decision have known that in the court's statement of the obvious harm in core segregation, there was less basis for celebration than despair. If faith alone would have made real our focus for Brown— faith in the law, faith in the courts, faith in the commitment to public education— then our expectations would have been realized, our goals achieved. The historians would not be able to conclude that we did not work, they may question whether we worked wisely. They would wonder why we expected the age-old rules of racial politics to be suspended as we enlisted laws that overturned outmoded precedents, and we expected the fall of those precedents to take down the myriad of political, economic structures built on white supremacy. Segregation was one of those social structures, but we learned by pain that it was not the only one, and we have learned to our sorrow that it was not even the most tenacious one.

Segregation died only when whites saw profit in its demise. Some few years ago, I tried in story form to convey this point. I called this story, *A Sacrifice of Children*. Let me set the scene and provide something of the message:

All the black school age children are gone. They simply disappeared. No one was willing to tell the grieving parents more than they already knew. It had been one of those early September days that retain the warmth of summer, shedding the season's oppressive humidity. It lifted on what was to be the first day of the new school year. It was, as well, implementation day for the new desegregation plan, the result after long court negotiations. Plans and lawyers had insisted on what one called a full measure of racial balance, while the school board resisted every departure from the pre-litigation segregated school structure. Now it all seemed for nothing. The black students, everyone of them, vanished on the way to school. Children who left on foot, never appeared. Busses that pulled away from their last pick-ups loaded with black children arrived at schools empty as did the cars driven by parents in car pools, even parents taking young children by the hands to their first day of kindergarten or preschool looked down and found their hands empty, the children suddenly gone.

Well, you can imagine the response without suffering through the details. The media thrives on the parents' angry grief, the suspects arrested, the politicians' demands for action and assessments, and the receding hullabaloo. The predictable statements were made, the actions taken. But there were no answers, no reasons, no black children.

Give them credit. At the first, the white people both in town and around the country were generous with their support and sincere in the sympathy they extended to the black parents. It was some time before there was any public mention of what many had whispered privately. That while the loss was tragic, perhaps it was for the best. Except in scrappy white neighborhoods, these all were never downgraded to "good riddance." Initially, they might have been because after all statistics show that black kids were the most poor children. School dropouts at an early age, no skills, no jobs, too much exposure to crime, alcohol and drugs. In a city that resisted meaningful desegregation for so long it was not possible to learn. Integrating schools would not automatically insulate poor black children beyond the risks of ghetto life.

For the balance of the story, I detail the opposition to bring about greater school desegregation. And all of you know that so well: What percentage of black students in a white school was too high; the concerns for academic standards and discipline problems, and of course, under all specifics, latent resentment among whites in their sense of lost status, their schools would no longer be "white"—a racial status whites equated with school quality, even when many knew their schools were far from academically impressive. Few blacks were happy that their children would do most of the bus riding for the school desegregation plan. All of the schools were located a substantial distance from their homes. Some felt that this was the only way to secure a quality education, because whites would never give black schools a fair share of school funds. And some believed that green follows white. Most black schools were slated for closure or warehousing. White schools that were to be closed due to declining enrollment gained a reprieve under the school desegregation plan. Extensive rehabilitation was performed on the older schools as school boards said that such was needed to better ensure that they remain academically stable and racially integrated.

Then came the shock that black student disappearance *came* as a shock. The superintendent called a press conference to report that because the system was funded based on average daily attendance, the disappearance of the black students (56 percent of the student population) now threatened schools. There were, the school superintendent explained, several additional components to the school financial crisis. Teachers' salary increases would have to be repealed as would the services of numerous contractors. The mayor met with the city officials preparing equally lengthy reports of the economic gains that would have taken place had the school desegregation plan gone into effect. The president of the local chamber of commerce did the same. The message was clear. While the desegregation debate had focused on whether or not black children would benefit from bussing to racially balanced schools, the statistics put beyond dispute the fact that virtually every white person in the city would benefit directly or indirectly from the desegregation plan that most of them had opposed. Armed with this information, a large sum was quickly appropriated to conduct a massive search for the missing black children. And for a time, hopes were raised. Eventually though, the search was abandoned. The children were never found, the community did discover the truth about school desegregation, but that wisdom had come too late. In ways they cannot imagine, all were part of the disappearance tragedy.

Many of the speakers at this NASBE conference have blithely advanced the merits of one or another alternatives to the direct desegregation of the schools: programs geared to education rather than integration, school funding reforms. As described here, all have merit in the abstract. Some are based on trial efforts in one school or another. But I tell you, the unspoken question regarding each of these alternatives is how to avoid the seemingly inexorable rule of racial progress. That is, no matter the disadvantaged masses, the nation will not adopt reforms unless it can see a benefit to whites. And what that benefit receives, so go the reforms. Here it seems to me is the dilemma that underlies the crisis in the public schools.

The moral of our story that somehow we must rise to the task of saving our children is clear. We must do so not because we do not recognize that they and we are victims of a society as racist now as it ever was. But we must save our children who can still be saved because they are our future, because they are us. 1994 will mark 40 years since the Supreme Court handed down the Brown decision. And at this point, even 20 years ago, we expected by now we could rest on our laurels and savor our success. It did not happen, could not happen, and neither hope nor faith can make the impossible real. We must then seek new means of achieving effective schooling for our children. Thank you.

stand up. So it seemed like we were the pioneers, and that once they suffered what had to be suffered, it was going to be alright. That's what we all believed. Many of us lawyers didn't listen to the teachers. Because we thought the teachers only had their self interests at heart, that they only wanted to protect their jobs. We were wrong about that. Now we say 40 years later, "What can we do?" And it's tough to deny that overall, even with all the inadequacies, with all of the shortages of materials, with all of the hand-me-down books, the walk to school in the dust of the busses that carried the white kids to school— all the traditional scenes that we could bring up so quickly—the conditions today in many schools are worse for black kids than they have ever been before.

I think we have to always keep struggling to make it better. The problem with most of these great social problems is that if you really had the power and the resources, you could correct them. We know that there are a number of teachers in the existing system who are doing extraordinary things. Some principals who are dealing within the existing system are doing extraordinary things. One of the main things we hear they have to do is fight the system, and deal with the entrenched bureaucracies. But that is the challenge. I come back to the fact that it seems hopeless, but it's no less a challenge because we stamp it hopeless. There are some folks out there to be saved, and it's our job to try and save all of them.

Following are excerpts from Derrick Bell's address to the National Alliance of Black School Educators. . .

On the crisis in Black America

As I sit in my room and spend hours on writing, the focus is on the devastation of our people. On the despair, on the sense that life may not last until a child becomes 21. That having a gun is your only sense of power and blowing away people who look like you. That is I think an inappropriate focus for our concern. These are our children, and our children are our future. And the future—whether our children are in the ghetto or privileged in the middle class—the future does not look bright.

In the period of 1979 to 1992, focusing only on Fortune 500 companies, 4.4 million jobs have disappeared. The situation is dangerous in that this is a society that extols liberty, but it thrives on competition for wealth. So that the absence of jobs leads not only to poverty, but it also leads to the loss of status and the deprivation of self worth. That which has happened to those of us in the inner city or our relatives, is not limited to black folks. Moreover, if history repeats itself, in economic hardships, racial hostility will increase.

These patterns are repeated with a vengeance, with little government effort to halt the rapid increase in joblessness or extend the growing belief that policies like Affirmative Action are somehow the cause of the nation's economic malaise. During all the book tours, I made my first and probably last appearance on *The Donahue Show*. After all of this stuff that I heard—"I'm not racist, but all of these black people, they're taking jobs, and they're not qualified, and they're getting in these good schools, getting these fancy positions, bla, bla, bla"—even Phil finally got a little tired of it. He said, tongue-in-cheek fashion, "Yes, yes, I know, every white person in America has a brother-in-law who lost out on a job to a less qualified black, right?" And the audience broke into wild applause. A statement that is ludicrous on its face, they believed it. It made me think about that saying that black folk can't get free until the rest of the folks get smart. And if that is the case, we are in very big trouble.

On Justice Thurgood Marshall's legacy

The fears I raise are based on more than an overactive racial paranoia of one senior veteran of the Civil Rights War. I'm reminded that at his funeral, the speakers there in Washington, transformed Supreme Court Justice Marshall's requiem into a celebration of a life committed to the eradication of racism. Borne on rhetorical wings, the eulogies lifted him to a place with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lifted him to that uniquely American racial pantheon where each man was afforded in death a distinction usually preserved for those who in life have achieved rather than failed to accomplish the goals to which they committed their lives. It's amazing, then and now, I marvel at how readily this society assimilates the myriad manifestations of black protest and achievement. The process, the continuing devastation brought by racial discrimination is minimized, even ignored, while those who gain some renown as they work to end those injustices are transformed into cultural reinforcements of the racial status quo. The achievers and the protestants fail to do what they intend to do, and yet sometimes, because of their failure, they are hailed.

They become indefeatable proof that even minorities can make it in America through work and sacrifice, and for some it is easy then to conclude that if Oprah made it and Bill Cosby made it, minorities who do not make it have only themselves to blame. Some felt that Justice Marshall left the court embittered by the dismantling of so many liberal precedents that he had helped to establish. Marshall surely was not pleased as he witnessed the conservative court majority dismantling decades of hard won fights. But a more probable source of Marshall's displeasure, was a tardy recognition that the reliance he and other civil rights advocates placed in the law, all too often ended up serving as a betrayal of the masses of black people who relied on our counsel and willingly placed their hope on our professional skills.

On African American's use of the law to fight racism

Now we placed our civil rights advocacy in the service of our integrationist ideas. And we ignored in the process our experience with the resiliency of racism. We viewed segregation as the prime barrier to black advancement. And by our sustained efforts, we dismantled the hated Jim Crow society. But we uncovered in the process, new standards that were neutral as to race that over time developed into a more sophisticated, more invidious vehicle for maintaining white dominance. Now, reversal of the legal doctrine combined with the devastating statistics of black poverty, unemployment, crime, family and community destruction are worsening so many lives despite the committed efforts of civil rights movements. We cannot forget that we urged the use of law and [illegible] as the major means to end racial discrimination. We did it in good faith! But with an inadequate understanding of both the limits of [illegible] the pervasive role of racism in the society. So that we who honor Marshall continue to labor in the vineyard hoping our efforts whether in the courtroom, or, as with many of you, in the classroom, can relieve racism's burden.

And as we struggle along hoping for something better, but trying to make do with what we have, it must be as distracting to you as it is to me to realize the blasphemy that Marshall's successor on the Supreme Court seems to personify that well-traveled road to success for black people. Namely, if you ignore the continuing perversity of racism and act as though the law is fair and color blind, those with favors to grant will reward your conformance with those rose-colored lies.

On the rage of the black middle class

Robert L. Allen in his 1969 book, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, reminds us that what we deem and what society deems as progress measured by the amounts of blacks who have been moved into management level positions, is not that dissimilar from developments in colonial Africa and India. The colonizing countries maintain their control by establishing class divisions within the ranks of the indigenous people. We are an indigenous people at home. A few able and safe individuals are permitted to move up in the ranks, where they serve as tall symbols of what was possible for the subordinated man. In this and less enviable ways, these individuals provide a legitimacy to colonial rule that it clearly did not deserve.

Now we cannot escape the burden of Allen's analysis, nor should we wish to. For the oppression that challenges people of color and those of us with the status of professionals may not be violent and dominating. But it is no less real, or potentially no less destructive. So we can't ignore the dilemma in Allen's analysis. We who are professionals relish our positions because we say they give us an opportunity to push the system, and maybe even the larger society in the direction of racial justice. What we cannot forget even as we push, is that our involvement may be having a very different effect than we hope or even recognize. Instead of gaining access to real influence, it is quite likely that we are legitimating a system that really relegates us to an ineffective, but decorative fringe. "I have enough daily bread," explains Offred, a character in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, "so I won't waste my time on that. It isn't the main problem. The problem is getting it down without choking."

On being "a necessary evil"

When I left Harvard the first time to go to Oregon to be Dean, a friend and colleague took me aside and said, "Remember that as a Dean, you are evil. That is, you are going to be rewarding expectation you should disappoint, and you are going to be disappointing expectation you should reward and most of the time you won't even know the difference." (Law School deans seem to have a lot more authority than they actually do.) He said, "Every morning when you wake up and you look in the mirror, you have to say, 'I am an evil.'" But he said, that you should then add: "Today, am I a necessary evil?"

His advice fits black people who are "successful" in the mainstream sense. It's very disconcerting to know that which we have done to gain where we are is taken by so many in the society as proof. You've all heard it, "You want to talk about that racism. You're black, and look at you way up there. Why can't the rest of *them* do like that?" It's not a question; it is a statement of belief. So in some ways we are evil, and the only question you have to ask yourself again and again and again is "Today, am I a necessary evil?"

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On the permanence of racism

Because of all this, I'm convinced that the mesh of racism is so woven into the nation's essential fabric that I simply do not believe it could ever be eradicated. There is then only hope based on a commitment to challenge it at every turn, at every new variation. And Marshall made this point in what was to be almost his last major speech. He said the battle for racial and economic justice is not yet won, indeed it is barely begun. He said, I wish I could say that racism and prejudice are only distant memories, and that liberty and equality are just around the corner. He said, I wish I could say that America has come to appreciate diversity and to see and accept similarity. But as I go around, I see not a nation of unity, but one of division: affluent whites, indigenous and immigrant, rich and poor, educated and illiterate. And he warned that there's no sanctuary in the suburbs. Democracy cannot flourish amid fear, liberty cannot bloom amid pain, justice cannot take root amid rage. He urged continued confrontation with the evils he had fought all of his professional life. No promise of victory here. No guarantee of success. He called us to believe in the sense of salvation inherent in struggle for struggle's sake. We must go against the prevailing wind. We must dissent from indifference, we must dissent from apathy, we must dissent from fear and hatred and distrust, we must dissent from a government that has left its young without jobs, education, or hope. We must dissent from the poverty of the nation and the absence of moral leadership. We must dissent because America can do better, and because it has no choice but to do better.

On affirmative action for whites

In our society, those who have can't look at those who don't and say, "there but for the grace of God go I." Rather, the tendency is to have reform. It's easy for those who have to say, prison reform is going to simply aid black criminals, welfare reform is going to aid black women and so on. And that opposition is enough to defeat these issues again and again and again. I don't see that changing. Most white people need affirmative action, for example. You've seen it. When a university administration wanted a new faculty member, the deans would call downtown:

"Old friend, how are you doing? You know our trust person is leaving."

"Well we have young John here."

"Send him up. We'll have lunch."

When young John doesn't drop the soup in his lap or cuss out the dean, they decide he should work out ok, and next thing you know John is on the faculty.

"One of the best around!"

Now with affirmative action, almost everyone has to advertise. For one position while I was dean, we had 300 applicants—almost all white, almost all white men. We had to have a committee and a process. At least there has to be the semblance of objectivity that simply didn't exist before affirmative action. And it's benefited mainly white men. But because it also threatens this sense by some whites that they are entitled to priority over blacks simply because they are whites, affirmative action is seen as a greater threat than their own previous elitist system of exclusion.

On school desegregation

When I supervised community school desegregation cases, I thought that my place in heaven was assured. I'd worked myself to death desegregating schools. Well. . . I don't feel the same way now. I'm not sure the way desegregation played out was "best" for our children. Nobody knows what the right answer is for society, all we can do is each day figure out what is the right answer for us. Happiness lies in recognizing evil in little ways and trying to do something about it. You may succeed, half the time you don't, but that effort is where the key to the pearly gates lies. I don't think there is or can be a let's move in ABC direction. It is individual. Don't wait for a consensus. Don't even wait for your brother or your sister, because then you won't do anything.

On confronting authority

It began for me with my first job in the Justice Department in 1957. There were only three black lawyers in the whole place. When I got over to the Civil Rights Division, one of the first things my employers wanted me to do was to tell them if I was a member of the NAACP. I said, "Yes, isn't everybody?" They didn't think it was funny. In fact, they thought it was a conflict of interests, and they asked me to resign. So I thought about it, and asked lots of middle-class friends, and they all suggested that I could "work from within." That is the most dangerous advice. The person I remember when I hear that phrase is the late William Hastings, the first black federal judge who left the War Department after he tried unsuccessfully to desegregate it and finally dropped it. He said that I should make up my own mind what I could live with doing. So I left Justice and went back to my hometown of Pittsburgh and worked with the NAACP as Executive Director (which was, by the way, the hardest job I have ever had). Before I had been there a year, Thurgood Marshall came through and asked me "What's a lawyer doing in a non-lawyer job?" I tried to explain, but he wouldn't listen, so he asked me to come up and join his staff. I moved to New York in 1960 as the sit-ins took place. Now had I stayed there working from within, I would have still been shuffling papers. I have been fortunate. But it is true that you can expect retaliation from those you oppose, and sadly you can expect an awful lot of silence from your friends. You have to weigh it all when you decide to act.

On civil rights "acts"

The pattern is very clear. Throughout our history, every civil rights advance—look at the Emancipation Proclamation—came at the point where whites (at least those in policy-making positions) perceived that which we had been pleading for as a matter of justice, would also serve the self-interest of the society. Blacks had been seeking the end of slavery for all the right reasons for many, many years—along with some white abolitionists who were working with them. The end didn't come until Lincoln perceived that the North was losing the war; that the North could disrupt the Southern workforce by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. *Then* he issued it. And like so many other freedom documents since then, it was mainly symbolic. As a matter of law, it freed not one slave because it only applied to those areas still under Confederate control. It's a marvelous document precisely because the patterns of it fit every civil rights action since, including that which we're celebrating the 40th anniversary of this year, *Brown v. Board of Education*. So that the pattern is the same: Blacks gain as a group and individually only when it is perceived that the gains they may have earned and fought for and been denied are those that will further the interests of the majority. A few African Americans are now in prestigious positions. But after you get past the few, even though the next group of African Americans will come along and be much more qualified by these credentials that the society holds so high, America isn't interested in them. The need has been served, you see, and now we are going back. SEDL

Practitioners and policymakers each have role in assessing student's language proficiency

Accurate tests of language proficiency, especially for non-native speakers of English are scarce. The two most commonly used tests of language skills—tests of oral language proficiency and standardized achievement tests—measure learning outcomes, not ongoing student progress.

Both practitioners and policymakers can take steps to improve the situation says JoAnn Canales in a report for SEDL. She recommends that when "standard information" must be used as a measure of language proficiency, it be accompanied by teachers' own judgements and observation data.

Classroom observation, structured interviews with students, dictation tests, and cloze tests (tests that ask students to use clues in the text to identify missing words) can all be used as additional measures of language proficiency.

Policymakers, on the other hand, have different roles in establishing language assessment procedures, says Canales. State education agencies should encourage language assessment by establishing guidelines for identifying and placing students in bilingual or English as a Second Language programs, training local educators, and monitoring local language assessment practices.

School districts, according to Canales, should be responsible for training teachers and administrators, administering assessments, reviewing student performance, and providing constructive feedback to state agencies.

Assessment of Language Proficiency: Informing Policy and Practice is available from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 211 E. 7th Street, Austin, TX 78701. (cite order no. SD-1089-SW, 24 pp., $4 prepaid)

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Schools and social services team with ERIC Clearinghouse to save youth from crisis

Students are plagued by a plethora of problems: poverty, homelessness, teenage pregnancy, and suicide remain common derailers to educational and life success. For years, schools have realized that neither they nor the community service agencies to which troubled students must turn can tackle these problems alone.

Thus, the Linn-Benton Education Service District in Oregon pulled together various community groups to map out a plan of youth services to avert teen crises. Then, the district teamed up with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management to produce a multivolume handbook series. The series details the district's collaboration and guides school responses to youth in crisis.

Volumes on attendance services, teen parenting, child abuse, and substance abuse are in print. The series is useful, claim the writers of the introductory volume, because it gives guidelines for the school to follow while detailing the process Linn-Benton District used to foster collaboration between schools and social service agencies.

The first volume urges schools to tailor their activities to local needs. At the very least, schools should add to the handbook information about local social services. They should also revise the information according to their own legal requirements and policies. Most important, schools may chose to cover crises the handbook doesn't include. The volumes also contain essays on school collaborations with social service agencies, as well as research reports, book, and papers in the ERIC database that have proven useful resources for schools and communities.

At-Risk Youth in Crisis: A Handbook for Collaboration Between Schools and Social Services: Volume 1: Introduction and Resources is available from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, College of Education, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403-5207. (59 pp., $7.50 plus $2.50 postage and handling prepaid; all four volumes available for $24)

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Teacher education institutions challenged to train teachers for racial, ethnic diversity

Teacher training institutions can no longer "dodge the fundamental issues of culture" and must accept the challenge of preparing teachers for racially and ethnically diverse classrooms. This conclusion comes from participants at a round table discussion on teacher education and cultural diversity held by Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. Both census data and school enrollment reports have shown a major shift in the racial and ethnic makeup of school populations. As a result, says a report on the proceedings, all teachers "must be better prepared to effectively teach all students."

The challenge, according to the report, goes "well beyond the problem of language to include differences in cultural norms, values, and expectation" because all of these factors influence the teaching-learning process.

The report does not say, however, that teachers should reserve specific curricula or teaching styles for each cultural group. More important is that teachers should be able to understand and identify the cultural similarities and differences students bring to school and be able to draw on a variety of different teaching strategies and practices in response to student needs.

To equip teachers, colleges and universities should help education students become aware of their own cultural backgrounds and biases; develop more precise screening mechanisms for future teachers who may eventually have problems with culturally diverse students; help teachers identify and select materials that are free of race, gender, and ethnic bias; and provide teachers with experience in schools that include people from different cultures.

A companion document describes over 50 promising programs and activities in California that deal with preparing teachers to work with diverse student populations, as well as with recruiting and retaining minority teachers.

The Challenge—Preparing Teachers for Diverse Populations is available from the Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 (cite order no. FW-389a-SW, 30 pp., $4.50 prepaid); ***Programs for Preparing Teachers for Working with Diverse Student Populations*** is also available (cite order no. FW-389b-SW, 74 pp., $8.50 prepaid)

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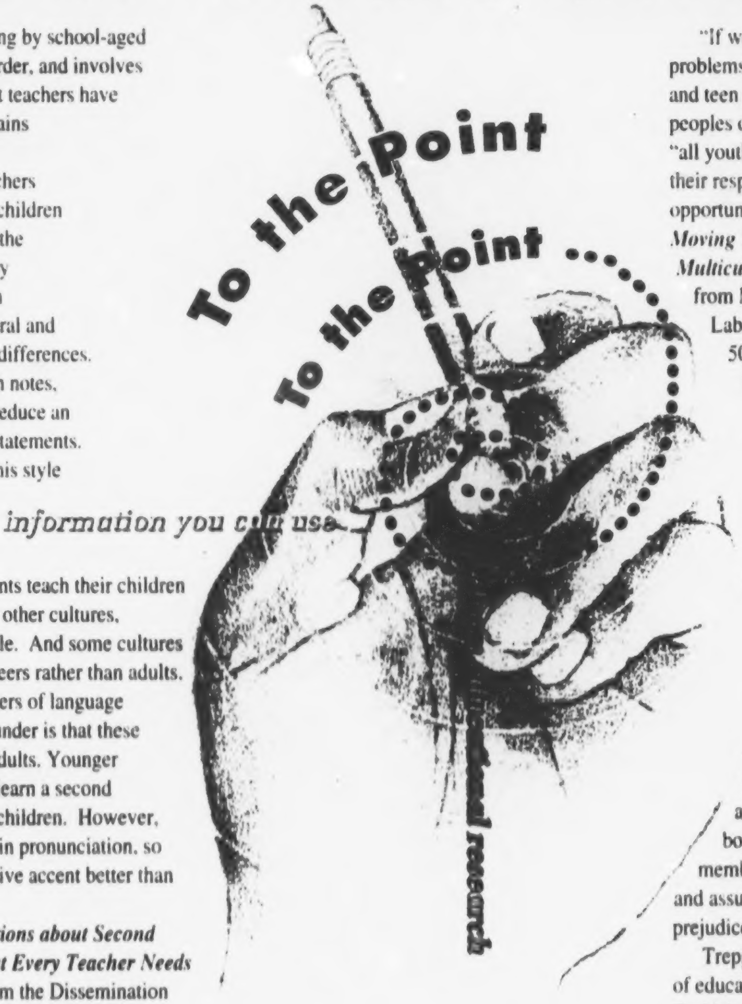
Teachers need to unlearn myths about how to teach language minority children

Most teachers base their teaching of English to children whose first language is not English on false assumptions, contends the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. Researcher Barry McLaughlin debunks many of these myths and offers alternative ways of teaching.

Point. . . To the Point . . . To the Point. . . To the Point. . . To the Point. .



"Second language learning by school-aged children takes longer, is harder, and involves a great deal more than most teachers have been led to believe," maintains McLaughlin.

For example, many teachers incorrectly believe that all children learn a second language in the same way, when in actuality children learn differently in accordance with their cultural and individual similarities and differences.

Americans, the research notes, speak analytically. They deduce an idea from several general statements. But not all cultures share this style of discourse and analysis. Further, in technologically sophisticated courses, parents teach their children through language, while in other cultures, teaching is often by example. And some cultures emphasize learning from peers rather than adults.

Yet another myth teachers of language minority students operate under is that these students learn faster than adults. Younger children don't necessarily learn a second language faster than older children. However, younger children do excel in pronunciation, so that they can develop a native accent better than older learners.

Myths and Misconceptions about Second Language Learning: What Every Teacher Needs to Unlearn is available from the Dissemination Coordinator, National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20037 (cite order no. EPR5, 11 pp., $4 prepaid)

Multicultural education helps minority students succeed

When the schools they attend create "an attitude that celebrates diversity," racial and ethnic minority students do far better academically and are less likely to drop out or abuse substances, reports the Western Regional Center for Drugfree Schools and Communities. Summarizing and citing recent substance abuse prevention research on Native Americans, African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans, Center researchers maintain the way for minority students to break cycles of poverty and educational failure is for them to become "bi-culturally competent." If they have the "opportunity to celebrate their respective cultures and to participate in the mainstream of society," the school becomes the place where bicultural competence can thrive.

Report writer Bonnie Benard identifies five essential components for creating an effective multicultural school environment: 1) active involvement of the entire school community; 2) a school policy that embraces the philosophy of multiculturalism; 3) redistribution of power within the school and the classroom; 4) high expectations by teachers of minority students; 5) curriculum that includes infusion of multicultural content, language study, teaching strategies that are sensitive to various student learning styles, and the hiring of ethnic minority teachers.

"If we are truly concerned with prevention of problems such as substance abuse, delinquency, and teen pregnancy," Benard concludes, all peoples of the U.S. must commit to ensuring that "all youth are given the opportunity to celebrate their respective cultures as well as the opportunities to experience academic success." *Moving Toward a "Just and Vital Culture": Multiculturalism in Our Schools* is available from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 101 S. W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204 (cite order no. NL-391-SW, 27 pp., $6.05 prepaid)

True multiculturalism requires educators to suspend judgement on others' needs and motivations

True multiculturalism is more than helping minority students to assimilate, asserts Carmen Treppte, a researcher at ERIC's Clearing-house on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. One of the main purposes of multiculturalism as articulated by its innovators is to make both minority and dominant culture members more aware of their own beliefs and assumptions in order to suspend their prejudices and open their minds.

Treppte's monograph relates the experiences of educators in a German town as they introduce Turkish preschoolers to German schooling. he process provides lessons for educators in all countries who work in multicultural settings. The German project involved Turkish immigrant parents, provided skills training and parent education, and advocated for minority communities.

The research highlights the importance of listening to what others want rather than telling them what they should have, and the need to consider differences in others' communication styles, values, and behavior patterns.

Multiculturalism in Early Childhood Programs is available from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, University of Illinois, 805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Urbana, IL 61801-4897 (cite order no. 210, 99 pp., $12 prepaid)

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SEDL'ings

Accomplishments, publications, and activities of SEDL staff members and associates

David L. Williams, Jr. was honored by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) for his "outstanding and dedicated service" to the organization. Wes Hoover was commended for his work in the Math/Science Consortium by the Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR). With Ria Reynolds-Gibbs, Shirley Hord published "The School Board's Leadership Role in Restructuring" in the *Journal of Texas Public Education;* and presented on Change Leadership at the Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Staff Development Council. She also delivered keynote addresses on leadership and school improvement to the Louisiana Association of School Executives in Baton Rouge, the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana in Lafayette, and the Career and Technology Education Professional Development Conference in Austin. Vicki Boyd & Pat Guerra co-presented *Leadership Skills for Quality Improvement* to the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals, and Boyd presented *Coaching and the Change Process* to Region VI Education Service Center staff. Jack Lumbley was named to the National Research and Training Center on Personal Assistance Services of the World Institute on Disability in Oakland, California, where he will help identify best-practice personal assistance models for people with severe disabilities. Jackie Palmer won the National Council of Teachers of English 1992 Best Book Award for her work with M.J. Killingsworth, *Ecospeak: Rhetoric of Environmental Politics in America.* She also published "Goals and Conflicts in University-Based Environmental Education Centers: A Case Study" in *Alternative Paradigms in Environmental Education Research.* As part of the Laboratory Network Program, Palmer and Glenda Clark collaborated with researchers in the Northeast and the Northwest regional laboratories to produce *Facilitating Systemic Change in Science and Mathematics: A Toolkit for Professional Developers* (Pilot Test and Alternative Assessment Pilot Test versions); Clark also wrote *Promising Practices in Mathematics and Science Education.* Linda Casas presented *ESL=Enabling Students to Learn* and *Content-Area Instruction through ESL Techniques* to Grand Prairie ISD personnel; and *Literature Leads to Learning* at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. Maria Torres presented *Preschool Mathematics is More than Counting* to the NINOS Head Start Project in San Benito, Texas.

New Faces at SEDL: **Patricia Hillman** is a Training/ Technical Assistance Associate in Resources for School Improvement; **Barbara Salyer** is a Sr. Training/ Technical Assistance Associate for the Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST).

Credit Due: Research and translation assistance for the "Border Issues in Education" series was ably provided by John Sooles. SEDL staffers Linda Casas, Dalinda Rodriguez, and Norma Saavedra provided information, contact referrals and invaluable support—as did Dr. Francisco Perea. Interview sessions with teachers in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico would not have been possible without the intercession of Romeo Romero of Laredo ISD. Illustrations were painted by Spanish artist Winston van Hughes who owns all copyright to his work. Designated photographs in the "Border Issues" story are from the collection of Austin, Texas-based photographer Alan Pogue, who retains their copyright.

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